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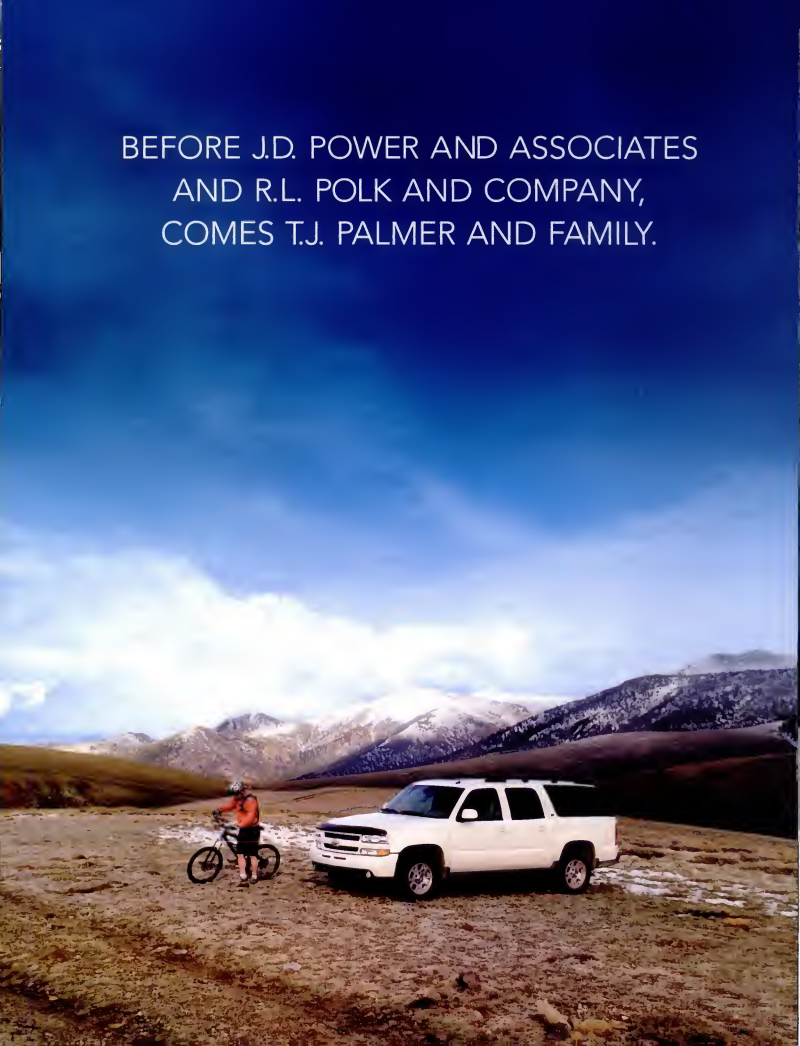
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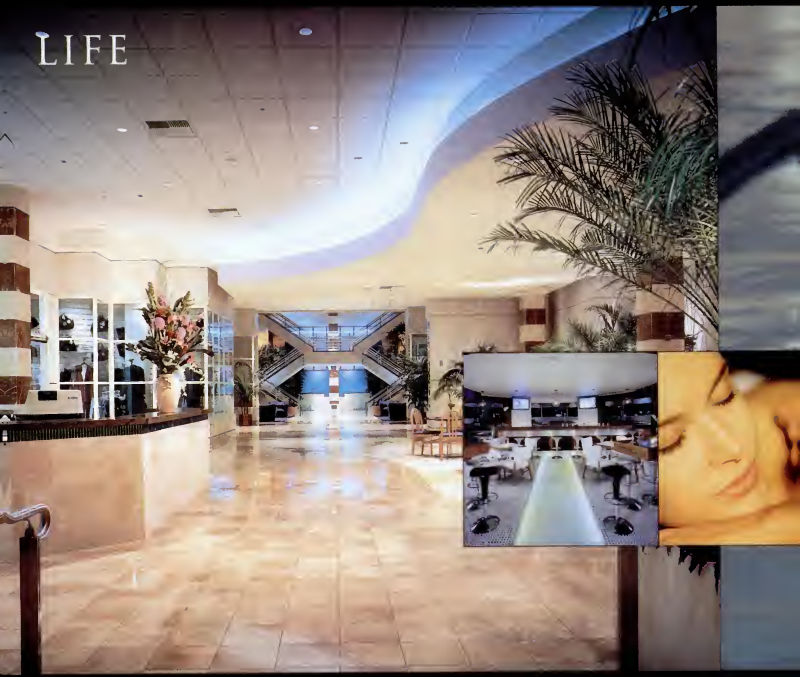
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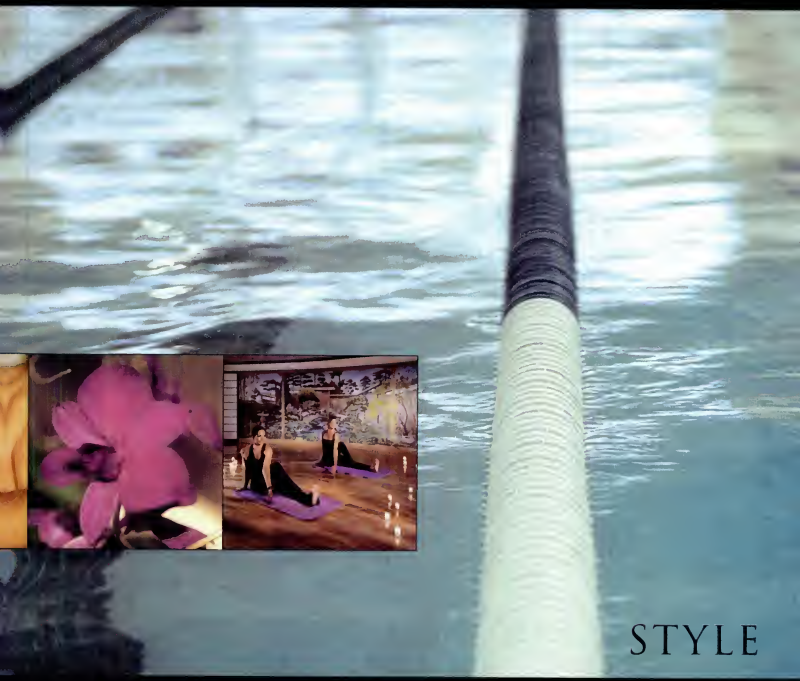
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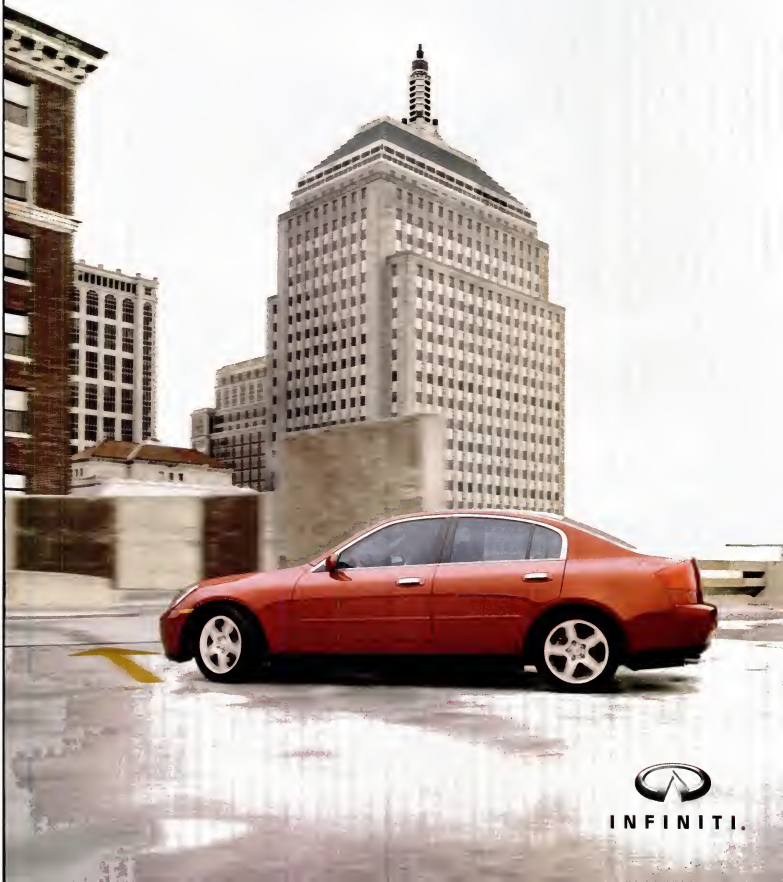
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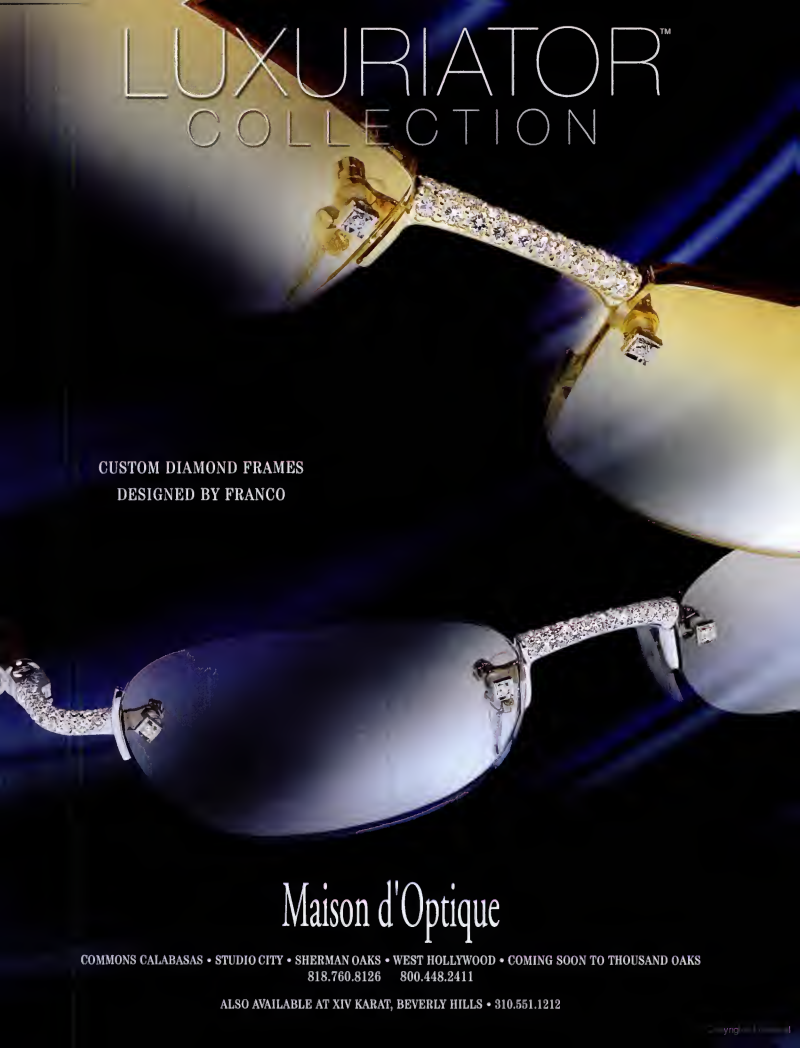


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HELLO, CUPCAKES: Four sweet treats from Joan's on Third, one of our Best of L.A." honorees. Photograph by Maryellen Baker

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DEPARTMENTS



CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD: Stacy Peralta, director of *Riding Giants*. Photograph by Ian Spanier (page 64)

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EDITOR'S NOTE

THE ROYAL DUMPLING SOCIETY

EVERY COUPLE OF MONTHS FOR THE PAST YEAR, I have joined friends on Sunday morning and gone searching for dim sum in the San Gabriel Valley. Maybe it's the carts rolling by piled high with small metal containers or that dumplings themselves are bite-size or that their architecture ensures a surprise inside, but dumplings are one of those foods that makes eating fun. Even if dumplings don't conjure childhood memories—among my earliest food memories is going with my parents to Chinese restaurants for Sunday brunch—they inspire childlike delight. Dim sum on a Sunday morning invariably requires waiting in line, so there's lots of time to talk. Monterey Park, Alhambra, Arcadia, and Rowland Heights are not on my normal route, so these excursions offer a chance to explore parts of the county I don't know well. But we have another reason to go: that sometimes ridiculous, sometimes exalted drive to find "the best." At some point, the conversation always turns back to the dim sum. You have to try the crab dumpling. The shrimp and pork dumpling. The fish dumpling. No, no, the red bean paste dumpling is even better. As good as Din Tai Fung Dumpling House in Arcadia was, don't you think Hong Kong Palace in Rowland Heights is even better? And what about Empress Harbor in Monterey Park? What about Full House or 888 Seafood?



The desire to know what's the best has various motivations. Partly it reflects the continuing democratization of society: the fundamental American belief that the wealthy should not be the only ones who have access to the finest. Partly it derives from a contrary impulse: the American obsession to rank everything. Just think how often we apply sports analogies when they are unwarranted. (So-and-so was the greatest left-handed periodontist to come out of Pittsburgh in the '50s.) But there's also something else at work. In a society that is as overwhelming as ours—especially in a city as large and complex as Los Angeles—a guide that declares what's best is extraordinarily useful. We at the magazine think it's more than that. We think it's indispensable. Which is why every year we produce our "Best Of" issue. We don't pretend that our choices are objective. But we do insist on strict criteria in making our selections. Even our whimsical categories (Best L.A. Summer Novel, Best Parking Garage, Best Foot Massage) have been tested (numerous summer novels were read, cars parked, and feet massaged). We ask our contributors to interview authorities in the field, to visit as many places as possible, and to range far from the neighborhoods they know. As our cover announces, we have arrived at 101 of our favorite things. We didn't include dim sum or dumplings among our categories. If we had, though, Hong Kong Palace or Din Tai Fung would have gotten my vote.

Kit Rachlis
Editor-in-Chief

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MAX GERBER ("The Secret Sharer," page 80) has received several photography awards, including an Association of Alternative Newsweeklies award and the C. Everett Koop Media Award. His images have appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph Review*, *L.A. Weekly*, and *Time*.



ROSS MACDONALD ("The Best of L.A.," page 98) is the proprietor of Brightwork Press, a printing company that uses letterpresses and fonts dating back to the 19th century. MacDonald's watercolor illustrations have appeared in *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. He recently completed *BadBaby*, the sequel to his children's book *Another Perfect Day*. *BadBaby* will be published by Roaring Brook Press in 2005.



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MICHAEL DORET's illustrations (cover) have appeared on the covers of *Time*, *New York*, and *TV Guide*. He has designed logos for the Graphic Artists Guild and the New York Knicks and created a preprinted envelope for the United States Postal Service.

STEVE ERICKSON ("Spaghetti Easterns," page 144) is the film and television critic for *Los Angeles*. Erickson, whose writing has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Esquire*, and *The New York Times*, is the author of six novels, including *American Nomad* and *The Sea Came In at Midnight*. He recently launched *Black Clock*, a literary journal published by CalArts.



ADAM MCCAULEY (Last Laugh, page 260) wrote and illustrated the children's book *My Friend Chicken* and illustrated *Martin MacGregor's Snowman* and the *Wayside School* series. McCauley, whose work has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Time*, and *Sunset*, has received awards from *Print* and the Society of Illustrators.

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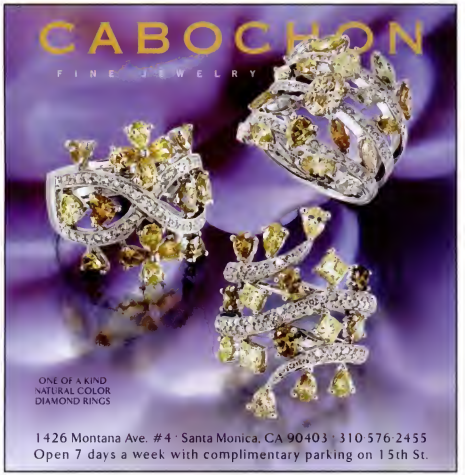
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LETTERS



THE RIVER'S EDGE

IN SUCH A BEAUTIFUL, GLOSSY MAGAzine about Los Angeles, it was a breath of Tahoe air to read Jesse Katz's "Under the Bridge" in the June issue. It is too easy to encounter the kind of individuals Katz interviewed and to forget that every person, no matter how destitute or ill, has his own dreams, feelings, memories, and hopes.

Cleopatra Victoria
San Francisco

BRILLIANT CONTRAST: THE "NEW downtown" of culture vultures, shoppers, politicians, artists, and power brokers ["Center of Attention," June] alongside the denizens of downtown's "Under the Bridge" underbelly. I can only hope that the people who respond to the ads in the front of the book took the time to read the article near the back of the book and reflect on what it says about our society.

Chuck Zaremba
Oceanside

KUDOS TO JESSE KATZ FOR PROVIDing such poignant insight in his article. It is easy to maneuver through our diverse and rich metropolis and miss or avoid the unpleasant realities of homelessness. The Union Rescue Mission is located between 5th and 6th, in the heart of skid row. Each year we are witness to thousands of displaced citizens who come to our doors seeking help, with profound stories of their own. In light of the economic struggles many are facing, it is probable that more like Starr will no longer be able to afford the SRO hotels that shelter them. Katz mentions that in 1996 the headline of a story on Starr in the *Los Angeles Times* read A WOMAN MOVES CLOSER TO THE EDGE. The number of women, many with children, who that headline could describe today is astonishing, and we know that number will continue to grow as government decreases and more people live from check to check. This situation is tragic. However, this problem can be alleviated if Angelenos move the crisis from a far-off place and into their hearts. When we drive past a homeless person, it needs to bother us to the point that we do something tangible—donate to a charity, call an elected official, or volunteer to serve in some capacity. We can make a difference.

Dr. Ralph E. Plumb
President/CEO
Union Rescue Mission
Los Angeles

URBAN AFFAIR

GOODNESS, IT IS ABOUT TIME EVERYone got as excited about downtown as I have been for years ["Center of Attention"]. I was brought here from El Salvador when I was seven, but I didn't discover downtown until I was 19. One day I stopped and parked near Pershing Square and walked, yes walked, for hours—to the Central Library, California Plaza, the Biltmore. During the next few years, I would walk through the old corridor and admire the buildings. Everyone comes here and takes advantage of our city; they leave a different person without thanking it. I have been excited about El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles since I was a teenager, and I see that the best is yet to come for our fair, crazy, lovable pueblo.

Dennis Sosa
Downey

LOST AND FOUND

I APPLAUD THE WONDERFUL ARTICLE "Past Perfect" in the June issue. You really showed the true art deco era of downtown Los Angeles. I think Los Angeles has some of the most decorative buildings of any city anywhere. What a delight it is to see such historical buildings; it must have

AMANDA FRIEDMAN

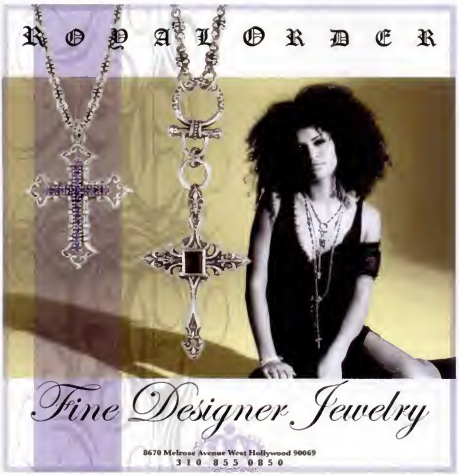
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LETTERS

been a beautiful time when they were built, and it appears it soon shall be again.
Gary Clement
Sherman Oaks

MAN IN THE MIDDLE

I WAS SO EXCITED WHEN I SAW THE cover story of your June issue ["The Dreamer"]. Just the night before I was looking into downtown L.A. lofts online. I had heard of what Tom Gilmore had done, but I didn't know his entire story. Ed Leibowitz wrote a wonderful chronicle of this man and his dream. Gilmore is a visionary who started something great. Leibowitz helped to fill in the blanks about a man I knew very little of.
Nicholas Weitzel
San Francisco

I READ YOUR HIGHLY CRITICAL PIECE about Tom Gilmore. As the real estate broker who assembled the Old Bank District for Tom, I felt you might have put more emphasis on Tom's gifts of inspiration. He inspired me to write my first real estate poems.
Ed Rosenthal
CB Richard Ellis
Los Angeles

TOOTING OUR HORN

For the third year in a row, *Los Angeles* magazine received the most awards in the annual City and Regional Magazine Association competition. In total, the magazine picked up nine awards. Winners included contributing writer Steve Erickson in the category of General Criticism; senior writer Jesse Katz for his October 2003 profile of Magic Johnson, "Master of Illusion"; and art director Joe Kimberling, named Designer of the Year. Joe also won first place for feature design.

The Casey Journalism Center on Children and Families awarded writer-at-large Edward Humes its top prize in the magazine category for "The Unwanted," his piece on MacLaren Children's Center that ran in the January 2003 issue.

LOS ANGELES magazine welcomes your comments. Please send letters to "Letters to the Editor," LOS ANGELES magazine, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90036; or reach us by fax at 323-801-0105 or e-mail at letters@lamag.com. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.





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BUZZ

THE CITY OBSERVED



Against Type

In a waxen Hollywood, Laura Dern dreams about breaking the mold *by Dave Gardetta*

MIDAFTERNOON ON A WARM spring day, Laura Dern is inside the Hollywood Wax Museum, killing time. She has a photo shoot for the DVD release of 1990's *Wild at Heart* later on and, coming up after that, a monthlong ride-along with her folk-rocker boyfriend Ben Harper on his summer tour. Eighteen years ago, Dern made her ravishing film arrival: materializing out of the darkness

HAIR AND MAKEUP: MEGHAN MCCLAIN/SOLO ARTISTS. PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT HOTEL

PHOTOGRAPH BY **BLAKE LITTLE**



MISTRESS OF THE DARK: Laura Dern veers into edgy territory in 'We Don't Live Here Anymore' (left) and in 'Citizen Ruth'

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: WARNER INDEPENDENT PICTURES, INC.; MIRAMAX; BILL MAYER

ENCOUNTER

in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* looking like a Technicolor denizen of a Hitchcock dream, asking Kyle MacLachlin, "Are you the one that found the ear?" In between then and now she has made some very good independent films like *Citizen Ruth* and *Rambling Rose*; shown up in a few duds and one blockbuster, *Jurassic Park*; dated Billy Bob Thornton; come close to marrying Jeff Goldblum; and kissed Ellen DeGeneres on television. And she can claim the most audacious line of movie dialogue ever spoken between daughter and mother. As a pregnant gas huffer from a life of hard knocks in *Citizen Ruth*, she confronts her born-again mother along with an army of "saved" pro-lifers.

"Don't abort your baby!" Dern's actual mom, the actress Diane Ladd, shouts at her. "What if I had aborted you?"

"Well," Dern screams back, "at least I wouldn't have had to suck your boyfriend's cock!"

"It's pretty hysterical—the luckiest line you could get to say in a movie," says Dern. "Especially to say it to your own mom." Stopping momentarily to adjust to the museum's dim light, she still looks like the young actress of *Blue Velvet*: all shinbones and elbows, more gawky-sexy than pretty, with steely blue eyes that might once have been called "flinty," and a zaftig nose about to sail off her face.

Dern's father is Bruce Dern; her godmother is Shelley Winters. She was conceived on the set of a Roger Corman film, *The Wild Angels*; grew up the child of a generation of raging bulls like Dennis Hopper and Jack Nicholson who were friends of her parents; and remembers summer camp one year as "my dad doing a movie with Hitchcock and my mom doing a movie with Scorsese." Now, almost 30 years after *Star Wars* all but nixed the rough-hewn film roles she was raised loving, Dern walks past wax diorama after wax diorama of modern film success stories—Tom Cruise movies, Sylvester Stallone movies, Arnold movies—finding herself a bit out of time.

"I have a nostalgia for the '70s that is so sincere," says Dern, examining the muscle-bound occupant of the *Cliffhanger* terrarium as one might scrutinize a weighty bug. "I remember coming into Hollywood when I was 15 to stand in a line three blocks long just to see *Ordinary People*, *Julia*, *Three Days of the Condor*, *The Candidate*—as kids, those were movies we wanted to see. In the '70s, there were hundreds of parts I wish I could have played—I can't say that now. And the same goes for men. My dad and Jon Voight in *Coming Home*? Those were beautiful roles. What do young actors want to be now—the Terminator?"

As if on cue, Dern walks smack into the "Three Faces of Schwarzenegger" display: barbarian, android, public servant. "Oh, geez!" she gapes in feigned shock. "Oh, my God!" She steps back to take in the sight. "Do you notice," Dern finally says, moving on, "how his head gets tinier and tinier in each advancing role?"

Dern has a small film coming up called *We Don't Live Here Anymore*, a dark study of two couples on the verge of divorce that is reminiscent of the films she pines for. It's her 39th movie, independent like most of her work, and will likely—owing to its subject and distribution—be seen by almost no one this summer.

Working on the fringe has left Dern without her bearings in contemporary Hollywood. At the *Star Wars* display she looks as if she's seen an apparition. "Oh, wow! Harrison Ford looks so real. That almost scares me—it looks like he's coming to life!"

A passing stranger tells Dern that the wax dummy is Liam Neeson.

ARTIFACT

Flimflam Flickering

The ersatz firefly is the one summer insect L.A. can't go without

FIREFLIES THRIVE IN THE STICKY SWELTER of an Iowa or Alabama summer. They don't do Los Angeles. "They're just not adapted to this Mediterranean environment," says biology professor Joan Leong of Cal Poly Pomona. For decades, the only place you could enjoy the poetry of a firefly-filled Southern California evening was at Disneyland, where, by no mean feat of Imagineering, tiny lamps, copper wire, and a hidden fan animate the mysterious creatures flitting about the entrance to Pirates of the Caribbean and the patio of the Blue Bayou restaurant. This spring, former Disney employee Tim Carter began selling similar bioluminescent spectacles for your backyard lagoon in Encino or Silver Lake. He struck a deal with Creativations, a Westlake Village marketing firm, to target individuals, hotels, and amusement parks—a faux firefly infomercial is already in the can. Although Carter's been visiting the Magic Kingdom since 1955, he only recently traveled to Tennessee and saw real fireflies for the first time. —*Chris Nichols*



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"Oh, my God! How terrible. I guess I don't know my *Star Wars*."

She does recognize the few actors in the museum from her godmother's generation. There is Paul Newman as Butch ("I was with him in *Fat Man and Little Boy*—he's lovely, and his blue eyes do look good here"), Clint Eastwood as the high plains drifter ("I worked with him in A *Perfect World*—that doesn't look like him, though"), and John Wayne as Rooster Cogburn, the sight of whom stops Dern in her tracks.

"My dad killed him, you know."

It's true. Bruce Dern was the first actor to murder the Duke on film, in 1972's *The Cowboys*—a killing that more than anything else signaled a (temporary) end to the kind of movies Wayne had made and heralded the start of a short run Bruce Dern's generation would enjoy.

"That was a hard time to live through," says Dern. "I had the fathers of kids I knew yelling at me for what my dad did. For some reason, I was obsessed then with Lucy, on her show, going with Ethel to steal John Wayne's footprints at Grauman's Chinese Theater. She became a huge influence on me. She was truthful in any situation. She was terrified and haunted by jealousy and miserable and manipulative, and whatever she was, it was pure. She taught me that, in a satire like *Citizen Ruth*, if you are truthful in your agony, it will make other people laugh." Dern looks around. "Where is she, anyway?"

Lucy, it turns out, is nowhere to be found—not next to Michael J. Fox, Mike Myers, or Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones. Dern leaves the museum and approaches a very young woman selling tickets at the entrance.

"Excuse me, where is Lucille Ball?" Dern asks the girl.

A sympathetic look comes over the girl's face. "Lucy has been moved out," she says apologetically.

"Well, what has replaced her?" Dern asks.

"Ahh—*The Matrix*," answers the girl, lifting a small arm to point at a corner platform behind Dern's head where Keanu Reeves, wearing a black space robe and looking at ease in his gummy state, gazes down at tourists exiting into the spring sunshine. LA

BUZZCUTS

A LITTLE OFF THE TOP—AND BOTTOM—FOR A BETTER AUGUST



Weird appointment of the year: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently named **The Rock** as spokesperson for his pet program **After School All-Stars.** Kids are encouraged to study hard or risk being choked by the former pro wrestler and body-slammed into the nearest chalkboard.



To raise funds for its new fish hospital—bloodworms to the ER, stat!—the Cabrillo Marine Aquarium will host a Chocolate Lobster Dive next month, in which divers will search the murky waters off Cabrillo Beach for milk chocolate lobsters hidden there by contest organizers. Next year's prize: tasty marzipan sea bass.

Art junkies are celebrating the recent launch of **Bergamot Books**, a repository of all things photographic, cinematic, and architectural. Located at Bergamot Station in Santa Monica, the bookstore boasts hard-to-find art books, political tomes, and upcoming signings by **Yoko Ono** and photographer **Michael Polidori.**

Instant collectible of the month: John Lautner's gravity-disregarding Chemosphere (pictured), a Paul Laszlo–designed doghouse, and a Buff & Hensman Case Study living room—such are the delights of photographer Julius Shulman's 2005 calendar. Benefiting the Art Museum Council of LACMA, the calendar is limited to 4,000 copies. Shulman is now selecting photos for the 2006 edition.

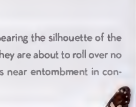




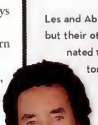
Tabloid readers and tourists on the fringe will love Chris Epting's **Marilyn Monroe Dyed Here**, a "*Hollywood Babylon* meets *Fodor's*" guide to the historic, tragic, and scandalous. The book, a sequel to his **James Dean Died Here**, has plenty of Southern California destinations, including the birthplace of the Egg McMuffin, the homes of all Four Stooges, Rick James's crack den—and our favorite, the Munchkins' party hotel.

Synchronized Swimming's World Showcase, part of the 2004 Toyota Aquatics Grand Prix in Long Beach, had to be canceled because of scheduling conflicts. Scheduling conflicts—in synchronized swimming? And they seem to have such great timing in the water.

Motorists traversing 80 bridges across the city will notice new signs bearing the silhouette of the **great blue heron.** This consciousness-raising effort lets them know that they are about to roll over no mere forlorn storm drain but our blessed **L.A. River**, which prior to its near entombment in concrete provided a much more welcoming habitat for the bird.



Les and Abby Stockton were major pioneers of bodybuilding back in the 1940s, but their other love was bugs—lots of bugs. The couple recently donated 100,000 moths, beetles, and butterflies to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. We're partial to the Titanus giganteus, a beetle that's big, mean, and edible.



What's a Motown legend to do after scoring Grammys and getting inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame? We know—sell frozen gumbo! **Smokey Robinson** recently hit local Vons and Pavilions stores to hawk his **The Soul Is in the Bowl** seafood gumbo. We're sure it's delicious, but just what is Jeff Brain—one of the prime movers of the Valley secession movement—doing as the company CEO?

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Winning Voice

For KCRW donors, a call from Matt Holzman is a dead giveaway ***by Dave Gardetta***



FREE RADIO: Matt Holzman, vocalizer of KCRW's largesse

IF MATT HOLZMAN WERE TO REACH YOU on the phone 343 days out of the year, odds are you would be instantly crushed to hear from him. Holzman, whose muscular build looks fit for digging trenches, and whose skin is as pale as a turnip, works a dozen or so feet beneath the surface of Santa Monica, in the labyrinthine studios of public radio station KCRW. Mornings, through glass portholes in the hallways of Holzman's workplace, you can spot his colleagues at task: a haggard-looking Warren Olney staring into the soul of his microphone as he worries the fat off the city's ills; DJ Nic Harcourt, thin as a paper towel, sifting cool from the station's large music library. Unlike his coworkers, Holzman takes over the mike just 22 days a year in fund-raising drives like this month's. (Last year's drives raised more than $4 million.) He is KCRW's on-air voice for its daily prize giveaways, bestowing on listeners iMacs and Jaguars and jet flights to Tahiti. "I have a feeling my day is going to get better," a woman told Holzman once during a broadcast call, "because when you call people and I hear it on the radio, they get stuff." Which is why people can be so let down to hear from Holzman—in, say, a business call for the station—during the remaining 49 weeks of the year. They immediately realize they're not getting stuff.

In American radio there is no one comparable to Holzman working today. Commercial stations give away prizes, but they don't hire a special DJ to take over microphone duties when the Weezer tickets are passed out. "I believe that people think I'm either computer generated," says Holzman, "or just some guy shipped in from prize central—a room with a desk and a phone and a pile of iPods." Holzman started out at KCRW in corporate underwriting. Then, seven years ago, the station created a sweepstakes to enliven its pledge drives, and Holzman was asked to give away prizes to donating listeners in calls that are taped and then replayed up to 20 times a day. It was a real slog at first. "We have a very sophisticated audience," he says, "and for the opening couple of years people just didn't believe me."

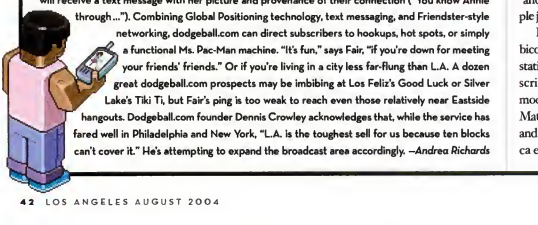
Five years ago Holzman passed a Rubicon of public awareness (no one at the station can explain it) to become, as he describes himself today, "this meta-post-modern version of myself." There is now a Matt Holzman who lives in Koreatown and drives to work in Santa Monica every morning, and there is a

HOLZMAN: SHELLY STRAZZIS. ILLUSTRATIONS: EBOY

AU COURANT

Roger Dodger

A new service makes the chance encounter less chancy



ONE EYENING AT LITTLE JOY, 25-year-old actress Annie Fair sends out a "ping" from her cell phone, courtesy of dodgeball.com. Soon, not only will Fair's close-by friends know she's arrived at this Echo Park bar of the moment, but any mutual acquaintances—so long as they have wandered into a ten-block radius—will receive a text message with her picture and provenance of their connection ("You know Annie through..."). Combining Global Positioning technology, text messaging, and Friendster-style networking, dodgeball.com can direct subscribers to hookups, hot spots, or simply a functional Ms. Pac-Man machine. "It's fun," says Fair, "if you're down for meeting your friends' friends." Or if you're living in a city less far-flung than L.A. A dozen great dodgeball.com prospects may be imbibing at Los Feliz's Good Luck or Silver Lake's Tiki Ti, but Fair's ping is too weak to reach even those relatively near Eastside hangouts. Dodgeball.com founder Dennis Crowley acknowledges that, while the service has fared well in Philadelphia and New York, "L.A. is the toughest sell for us because ten blocks can't cover it." He's attempting to expand the broadcast area accordingly. *–Andrea Richards*



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second Matt Holzman who has been stripped of all his worldly furnishings, leaving just a voice—one that is personable, upbeat, and intimately tied to computer giveaways, and that produces a Pavlovian response in those who hear it. "These days when I call people on the phone and introduce myself as Matt Holzman, they instantly ask, 'What did I win?'" At restaurants, in the middle of a linguine order, Holzman is now interrupted by waiters who recognize the vowel enunciation in *tongole* and then blurt, "Oh, my God! You're the giveaway guy!"

It's not every listener, however, who goes berserk at the sound of Holzman's voice. "The last drive," he says, "we had a movie director, a TV director, and two screenwriters, and media-savvy people are not always going to react." Even listeners who know they have Matt Holzman on the line can turn downright nasty. After being hung up on several times by the same woman in a failed attempt to award a Tahiti vacation, Holzman was finally told by the listener, "I know you're Matt Holzman, I know you're giving away a Tahiti vacation, and I don't want your damn trip." In February, Christopher Guest's name was pulled for the daily giveaway. The reserved director's response on hearing that he had just won a laptop he likely did not need was . . . very polite. (Guest still claimed the computer.) That may be the real "meta-postmodern" story behind Holzman's calls, many of which reach people who don't seem to need another iMac, who give to the station not out of the desire for a prize but out of generosity, and who in turn inspire other listeners to phone in and give for the same reason. "There is a sincere passion for the station you can hear in these calls," says Holzman. "Callers may be subdued on the air, but just when they're hanging up you can sometimes hear a '*Wooo!*'" LA



GEOGRAPHIA

Nipped and Tucked Away

Well-healed accommodations for plastic surgery recovery

'THE SWAN' AND 'EXTREME MAKEOVER' notwithstanding, cosmetic surgery is usually the most private of matters—and often an occasion for plausible deniability. For a going rate of $700 a night, L.A.'s lush aftercare havens will give you the star treatment: clandestine transport, phone screeners, and all the ice packs and bandage changes your heart, nose, lifted brow, and freshly tucked tummy demand. —*Jiyeon Yoo*

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Rates	Suites begin at $700 per night, $1,500 per night with private-duty nurse	Two rates: $695 or $795 per night; oxygen tank included	Start at $695 per night, $800 for King Suite with 50-inch TV and garden patio	$675 per night for Beverly Glen location; $750 per night at Loews hotel	Rooms are $350 per night, $400, with private bath	$129 to $259 per night, depending on room size and length of stay
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RONALD REAGAN

1911–2004

EPITAPH

IF YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND the allure of President Ronald Reagan, the best place to go is the Presidential Library. No, not the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, where the president is buried. Sure, you can go to the library (as hundreds of thousands have), itself a kind of shining city on the hill, completed now with the president's own grave. If a grave site can seem shiny and optimistic and death defying, then this one does, its curved limestone wall etched with Reagan's homiletic words about the goodness of man.

The entire library is like that. In feeling, it is more Knott's Berry Farm than a library (all the archival material is down below and inaccessible to the public). There is one cozy stage set after another: an oldfangled kitchen (the kind that was in his boyhood home) and an old-style radio studio (like the one he used in his early announcing days), even a booth from Chasen's, the famed West Hollywood restaurant, circa 1952, the year Ronnie and Nancy wed. And pretty pictures everywhere of the square-jawed Gipper and his well-dressed gal and, on display, the clothes they wore here, there, and everywhere. It all has the same impenetrably cheery look, as if the whole place were exhaling a kind of self-satisfied, all-American "aw shucks, didn't we have fun." There is scarcely a dark cloud, not a moment of introspection, not a scintilla of self-doubt or self-scrutiny. That's why, if you want some insight into the 40th president of the United States—and how and why he recaptured the country's attention during his transcontinental funeral march—the place to go is not the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library but the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace in Yorba Linda. The comparison is striking, revelatory, even wrenching.

Not that the Nixon Library isn't itself hopeful. Through its displays and memorabilia it lays out the narrative of a small-town Southern California kid who made good, who struggled up and out of his narrow, rural, Christian-inflected boyhood, out, in fact, of the small, cramped farmhouse that is right here on the grounds and into the wider, more sophisticated world, going the ultimate distance to the White House on pure grit and grasp. This was not an innately charming or physically blessed boy or man. Not that any of that is said in so many words. As is the wont of such libraries, the tale of the rise (and fall) of Richard Nixon tries to be upbeat. But the cumulative images tell the story. Walking through the library is like walking through a Greek tragedy: a petulant, fatally flawed hero who rose as high as you can

BY ANNE TAYLOR FLEMING

ILLUSTRATION BY **BRAD HOLLAND**

rise and then fell as hard as you can fall. Oh no, this was hardly the trajectory of Ronald Wilson Reagan, bathed in a golden glow as he made his way in the reverse direction, from his small town in the heartland to (mid-level) Hollywood stardom and into the arms of his starlet-turned-wife, Nancy, and of the rich local burghers (his so-called Kitchen Cabinet: Justin Dart, Alfred Bloomingdale, Holmes Tuttle, Charles Wick, among others) who would help pay and pave his way into political office. If Reagan had to get here to launch himself, Nixon had to get out of here. He didn't have a telegenic bone in his body. You just have to watch again that painful tape of his 1960 presidential debate with John F. Kennedy (it's at the library), Kennedy all charming and suave and handsome, Nixon sweaty and frowny and ill at ease. Politics aside, Ronald Reagan would be the first president to evoke John F. Kennedy in the public imagination, almost two decades after Dallas.

In the beginning, of course, Ronald Reagan was more of a Kennedyesque liberal than not. That's another interesting part of the tale, his optimistic—or is it opportunistic? or are they the same?—switch from being a card-carrying Hollywood liberal to being an impassioned corporate-sponsored conservative. My parents, both actors, socialized with the newlywed Reagans in the late '40s and early '50s and remember his good-natured and vociferous Democratness. When he switched, he was equally vociferous on the new side, giving a barnstormer of a speech in 1964 in praise of Barry Goldwater. It is fair to say that the mind of the convert—he who swings sharply from one side to the other—does not tend to be a nuanced one. It is a box to be filled with fervor, this kind, that kind, this side, that side, so that there was always about Reagan a sturdy, self-convinced simpleness, a rightness that did not brook shadings. Communism is bad; it has to go. Big government is bad; it has to go. Taxes are bad; they have to go. It's morning in America. That his conservatism, when it came, came in a sunny Southern California wrapper helped, too. It was not the hectoring, biblically fraught, neocon conservatism of many of his Republican heirs, including the ones currently dominating the White House.

No question, Ronald Reagan was pure Southern California, in the way people are who come here with big dreams and get them requited (as opposed to all the other poor slobs who come here toting schemes and dreams of fame and fortune that go belly-up). Another chance, a new beginning, a new career, heck, a whole new ideology. Why not? Nixon, on the other hand, was the homegrown grunt who had to claw his way up and out, a man who took on complexity as he went—defeats and scars and resentments—while Reagan always seemed simpler and simpler, a man who slept well and cleared brush and was blissfully untroubled by his own contradictions, if he even saw them as such: an exemplar of family values who had opaque, often estranged relations with his own children (of whom there are almost no pictures in his library), a conservative who nearly tripled the national debt, a land lover who opened public land to developers. For shame! Oh no. Not if you're Ronald Reagan. He was shame free, which is what made him blame free, or Teflon, as he was famously called. Things slipped off him because he didn't let them in, didn't take them on. What? Who me? Even the arms-for-hostages Iran-Contra mess just seemed to slide off him, leaving a handful of slippery underlings to go a few rounds with Congress.

We like presidents who tell us we're the unalloyed good guys. We are weaned, all of us, on that idea of American goodness, uniqueness, the gift of our beginning, our bounty. We are all susceptible to that idea on some deep, almost preconscious level. We fight always the knowledge of our transgressions against that goodness—slavery, for example; slaughtering the Indians, for



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A MAN OF THE WEST:
The president-elect and Nancy on their ranch in Santa Barbara in 1980

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THE LAST GOODBYE: Nancy and the children at the grave site in Simi Valley

example—and the shame and sadness that knowledge brings, a shame reruffled by numbers of things, most recently those disgusting pictures from Abu Ghraib. We want someone to get us back to the fuzzy-warm feelings of that beginning, and nobody did that better than Ronald Reagan. There will be "morning in America." There will be "bright dawns ahead." The word choices were perfect: morning, dawns. We can begin again. Just follow me. George W. Bush tries, of course; he gets it, ingratiating himself into the Reagan funeral extravaganza as deeply yet delicately as possible, but you can hear the gears shifting in Bush's optimism. He has none of the former president's natural eloquence or ease, giving us, instead of misty-eyed, mellifluous phrases, patriot-bravado and tense clichés.

So we buried the 40th president with lavish attention in accord with the 130 pages of detailed plans the Reagans themselves had drafted. It was somber and big and stately and over-the-top, with calculated Kennedy funeral references: a grieving widow leaning her cheek on a flag-draped coffin, marching her frail, determined self across the country and back again, the custodian of the coffin and the legend. This was no beautiful young widow. This was a woman in her eighties—still Bel Air chic with her black dresses and big glasses and well-coiffed hair. The Reagans lived out their post–White House lives in an expensive Westside enclave, in a house bought for them by rich friends where he slid further into never-never land with Alzheimer's. She is admired for her long, painful vigil and her fight for stem-cell research and her enduring attention to her husband's legacy. If nothing else, the library, where she finally brought him to rest, is a testament to a long, exclusive love affair. The once-distanced children were there in Simi Valley as the sun set. In that shining California moment, his reconstituted family in attendance—along with world leaders and old Hollywood pals—Reagan's journey came to an end. The obits were written, hundreds of them, but almost all of them carried the strange sense that no one—maybe not even the treasured wife—had really known this man at his core, the sense that you can't help carrying away from his sunny, sunny library. LA


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Meryl Streep and son Henry at AFI



Clint Eastwood, Shirley MacLaine, and Kurt Russell at AFI

PHOTOS: (EASTWOOD) CHRIS POLK/FILMMAGIC/GETTY IMAGES; (STREEP) STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE; (HAWN) GUEST AS FOLK ALEX BERLINER/BEI/WIREIMAGE

SEEN

Drama Queen

MERYL STREEP WAS THE BELLE OF the ball when the American Film Institute honored her with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Kodak. Jim Carrey sang, Robert De Niro got weepy, and Tracey Ullman thanked Streep for keeping her top on. Most of Jack Nicholson's tribute didn't make the USA Network broadcast. "Meryl is a c—," he deadpanned amid the praise, causing Streep to nearly fall off her seat laughing. Donors who'd ponied up at least $10,000 in the past year got a big thanks at the United Way's Alexis de Tocqueville Society Gala. The do was held at the Palisades estate of Dennis Tito, the fellow who took a $20 million joyride to the International Space Station a few years back. Showtime's *Queer as Folk* premiered its new season opener and threw a party afterward at the SkyBar, which was almost as happening as the Pittsburgh gay bars in the show. —*Kari Mozena*

"I think she knows more about channeling than I do."

—SHIRLEY MACLAINE, about Meryl Streep, at AFI



Goldie Hawn at AFI

"I'll answer any question other than 'How do you go to the bathroom in space?'"

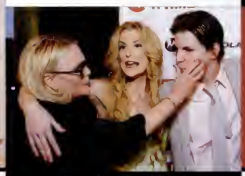
—Millionaire DENNIS TITO, discussing being a space tourist, at the United Way



Dennis Tito at the United Way



Harris Allard and Michelle Clunie at *Queer as Folk*



Sharon Gless, Thea Gill, and Gale Harold at *Queer as Folk*

"Actors' stories are generally 'Me-me-me-me-me-me—and how fabulous do you think I am?'"

—JAMES WOODS at AFI



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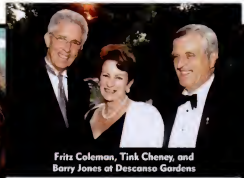
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Casey Johnson and Bijou Phillips at the Collage Foundation



Fritz Coleman, Tink Cheney, and Barry Jones at Descanso Gardens



Anthony Hopkins and Bruce Lamoureux at the Caritas Gala

CARITAS: DESCANSO: LEE SALEN RING/FOTOFAB; COLLAGE: CHRIS WEEKS/WIREIMAGE; KILL BILL: MARK SULLIVAN/WIREIMAGE

SEEN

Silly Rabbits

THE TERM *PAINTED LADIES* TOOK ON a whole new meaning during the DVD release party for *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* at the Playboy Mansion. Playmates donned Uma-style yellow tracksuits made of paint, waitresses dressed as naughty nurses (complete with eye patch), and nobody wore anything when jumping into the pool. Anthony Hopkins cut the rug at the Regent Beverly Wilshire, where St. John's Health Center handed him a Caritas Award for his support of the hospital. No. Ten Tanqueray invited young lovelies Bijou Phillips, Casey Johnson, Jared Leto, and Angus MacFadyen to the Palisades for a sip and a dip to raise a few bucks for the activist-minded Collage Foundation. Descanso Gardens was aglow for its annual Lanterns in the Moonlight fundraiser. Supporters tipped back sakes while listening to *taiko* drummers and trying not to trample the foliage. —*K.M.*

"I've been asked for an autograph while being wheeled into surgery."

—ANTHONY HOPKINS at the Caritas Gala



Molinda Williams at *Kill Bill*

"This house is so hot. Casey, tell your dad to buy it."

—BIJOU PHILLIPS, to Johnson & Johnson heiress Casey Johnson, at the Collage Foundation



Jared Leto at the Collage Foundation



A waitress at the Collage Foundation

"Tony isn't one of those people that gets all stompy-toed about things."

—SISTER MAUREEN CRAIG, about Anthony Hopkins, at the Caritas Gala

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Jack Black at Women in Film


Rhea Perlman, Danny DeVito, and daughter at the Los Angeles Film Festival


Alexandra Kerry at Women in Film

"I suggested we bring all the babies tonight and use them as centerpieces."
—BLYTHE DANNER at Women in Film


Gwyneth Paltrow and Blythe Danner at Women in Film

SEEN

Mama Mia

IT WAS ALL BABY TALK AT THE 2004 Women in Film's Crystal and Lucy Awards dinner. Debra Messing and Peri Gilpin left their newbies at home to venture out in honor of fellow new mom Gwyneth Paltrow and her parents, Blythe Danner and the late Bruce Paltrow. The Los Angeles Film Festival kicked off with a screening of *Scrubs* star Zach Braff's directorial effort, *Garden State*, with an after-party at the Hollywood Athletic Club. Surfers put on their shirts and slipped into their flip-flops for the Surfrider Foundation, which celebrated its 20th anniversary. Surfboards bearing a commemorative logo were auctioned off, with one board fetching $45,000. Jack Johnson and Perry Farrell set down their beers long enough to accept Keepers of the Coast Awards. The Tylenol in the goody bags probably came in handy for hangovers the next day. —*K.M.*

"My brain cells are all coming out in my breast milk."
—GWYNETH PALTROW at Women in Film


Jack Johnson and Perry Farrell at the Surfrider Foundation

"I have more friends in the water than I do on land.... I'd say the same thing if I was sober."
—PERRY FARRELL at the Surfrider Foundation


Zach Braff and Faye Dunaway at the Los Angeles Film Festival

PHOTOS: (JUSTIN) KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE; WOMEN IN FILM: GREG DECUIR/WIREIMAGE; SURFRIDER: JASON MERRITT/FILMMAGIC

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STYLE



Back Drop

As fall fashion hits the racks (in the heat of summer), it's hard to resist the new backless dresses. And in L.A., a little jewel action is a must, no matter what the temperature. Mixed together, these sweet, feminine styles can be given a twist. Instead of wearing a dangly necklace in front, swing it to the back with attitude. THIS PAGE: Ralph Lauren Collection cotton tulle embroidered dress; $8,000 at Ralph Lauren, Beverly Hills. Gabriela de la Vega "Nikko" 18-karat-gold lariat necklace with multicolored tourmalines; $6,100 at Barneys New York, Beverly Hills. —*Zoe Wadler*

HAIR & MAKEUP: STEPHANIE DANIELS/CONTRIBE. MODEL: SONIA M./WILHELMINA

PHOTOGRAPH BY **MINDEE CHOI**

PRIME FINDS



Desert Bloom
Michelle Ray velvet leaf hair clips; $40–$48 at Lisa Kline, L.A.

Cami-flage
Trina Turk "Enchanted Forest" stretch charmeuse camisole; $132 at Trina Turk, L.A.



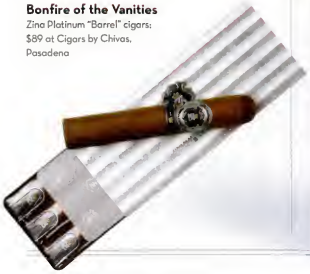


Time Traveler
Robert Lighton "Hudson" sterling silver watch with leather strap; $2,950 at British Khaki, L.A.

Dust Kickers
Bruna Magli men's desert boots; $315 at Arthur Beren, L.A.



Bonfire of the Vanities
Zino Platinum "Barrel" cigars; $89 at Cigars by Chivas, Pasadena



Sand Sweeper
Sultan's Eyes washcloths; $40 each at Apothia at Fred Segal, West Hollywood



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Nanook of the West
Ugg "Sundance Slauch Haba" sheepskin bag; $280 at Kitson, L.A.



Cape Crusader
Murielle "Fluff Puff" poncha in kid mohair; $135 at Baulmiche, Beverly Hills



Native Tongue
Minnetanka suede lace-up boots; $70 at Intuition, L.A.

PRIME FINDS



Gold Mine
Catherine Michiels "Stardust" 14-karat-gold bracelets with (from left) Peruvian opals ($260), carnelians ($260), and gold charm ($620); at Spirituali, L.A.



Dream Catcher
Greg Jardan shaved-cashmere throw; $900 at Greg Jardan New York, L.A.


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Among the Swells

DOCUMENTARIAN STACY PERALTA CAPTURES THE SURF ELITE WHO RIDE THE BIGGEST WAVES OF ALL BY ROBERT ITO

LAIRD HAMILTON IS THE GREATEST big-wave surfer in the world. When asked how Hamilton mustered the courage to ride waves 60 feet tall, walls of water that, had he wiped out, would have likely shattered bones or left his drowned body bobbing in the surf, his father had a simple answer. The family, he explained, had had a third testicle attached to their son at birth. One baby, three balls—is there no limit to a father's love? Hamilton's peers laugh about the explanation, but not one will go on record saying that the story is untrue. How else to explain the courage of one who has conquered Maui's Jaws and Tahiti's Teahupo'o, two of the globe's scariest surfing spots? How else to explain one who looks over the precipice of a wave ten stories high, then calmly drops down its face?

There are millions of surfers on Earth, but only a small number—fewer than 1 percent—are true big-wave riders. Fear is the primary reason the club is so small. Statistically speaking, other sporting activities are more likely to kill you—climbing Everest, say, or bull riding—but few can match big-wave riding for sheer terror. There are the wipeouts, of course, but the most frightening aspect is being held underwater as wave after wave crashes down on top of you. Your

PRINTS OF TIDES: Stacy Peralta is the rare filmmaker who gets surfing right

PHOTOGRAPH BY IAN SPANIER

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chest constricts as your last seconds of oxygen tick away. Surfers compare it to being trapped in a gigantic washing machine; even if you don't die, your body and brain and heart think you have.

Stacy Peralta, the director of the 2001 skateboarding documentary *Dogtown and Z-Boys*, has been thinking about fear a lot lately. Peralta spent much of last year interviewing the world's best big-wave riders for his surfing film *Riding Giants*, and while the subject of fear was rarely brought up explicitly, it was often lurking around the edges of conversations. Like most directors of surfing films, Peralta wanted to find out Why Surfers Surf, a question that is asked even more of big-wave riders than of their comparatively cautious peers. It is a query qualitatively different from asking why others paint or write or practice law, because people are rarely afraid to paint or write or practice law. How can some surf a place like Jaws or Teahupo'o, we wonder, when the very idea fills the rest of us with horror?

Peralta sits at a picnic table in front of Forever Films, a postproduction facility in Santa Monica that has been his center of operations for the past several months. Sporting a goatee, a baseball cap, and a Black Label Skateboards T-shirt that reads NEVER BE BOUGHT NEVER BE SOLD, he looks like Michael Moore's thinner, fitter brother. A big wad of cotton is jammed in his left ear. A lifelong surfer, Peralta recently underwent surgery for "surfer's ear." Ride the waves in cold weather for three decades, as Peralta has done, and the bony lining of your ear canal grows in on itself. Peralta had delayed treatment for so long that the canal was 99 percent closed; doctors inserted a tube in his ear to allow drainage. "I can hear fine," he says. "But they had to go into the tunnel and grind away the bone with, like, a little dentist's grinder."

Fear, pain, near drownings, drills boring out your ear canal—they're all elements of a sport that longtime surfers describe as both an addiction and a love affair. Peralta hoped to capture all of that passion and trauma in *Riding Giants*, which, last January, became the first documentary to open Sundance in the festival's 20-year history. It recently opened, and expectations are high, largely because of Peralta's success with *Dogtown*, a small film that became the defining text on the evolution of Southern California's skateboard culture. Peralta's goals for this film were equally high. By focusing on three pioneers of the sport—Greg Noll, one of the fathers of big-wave surfing; Jeff Clark, the Northern California surfer who "discovered" Maverick's, a then-unknown surf spot; and Laird Hamilton, the reigning king—the director intends to tell the entire history of big-wave riding.

The surf cinema canon is loaded with no-plot, all-action shorts and documentaries—often created by the surfers themselves—and *Gidget*-y efforts produced by Hollywood execs to cash in on the surfing craze. So many directors have tried and failed to capture the



BREAK DANCERS: Greg Noll and Laird Hamilton

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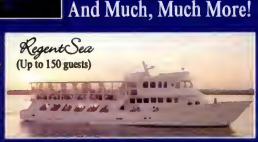




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spirit of the sport that it is far easier to name five truly awful films than to name five truly great ones. *Endless Summer* was great; *Big Wednesday* had moments of greatness. With dozens of the giants of big-wave surfing involved with *Riding Giants*, from Peter Mel and Darrick Doerner to Dave Kalama and Kelly Slater, the pressure was high for this film not to stink. "When we started the production, one of the guys told me, 'Listen, homes, I'll give you all my support. But if you screw up, I'm gonna kick your ass,'" says Peralta. "That's the kind of thing I was dealing with."

PERALTA'S INSPIRATION FOR *Riding Giants* was Greg Noll, one of the most popular and flamboyant big-wave surfers of the 1950s and '60s. Nicknamed "Da Bull" for his enormous size and aggressive riding style, Noll was a master of self-promotion, appearing in scores of surf movies and creating Greg Noll Surfboards in the early '50s (the Hermosa Beach company would later become the largest maker of boards in the world). His "jailhouse shorts," baggy swim trunks emblazoned with broad black and white stripes, made him instantly recognizable in the most crowded of lineups and the blurriest of photos. "Nobody was gonna take credit for my waves," Noll says. "And I didn't want to take credit for anyone else's."

Peralta first met Noll when the director was conducting interviews for *Dogtown*. Noll's surf shop in Hermosa Beach had sold some of the area's first skateboards, and Peralta wanted to speak with him about those early days. Noll had never heard of Peralta and didn't care much for skateboarding, but he went along with the interview as a favor to his friend, fellow surfer Craig Stecyk. "I didn't know what was going on, so I just made up this story about how Stecyk rode my son down the streets of San Francisco on a skateboard," he says. "It was all bullshit."

The fabricated anecdote didn't make the film, but Peralta knew that he had found a figure who could anchor *Riding Giants*. Noll was funny and foulmouthed, and his life story had a climax to rival that of the most overblown Hollywood surf film. On December 4, 1969, Noll was on Oahu when a record swell pounded the island's North Shore. The storm knocked houses off their

foundations; residents were ordered to evacuate the area. When Noll first heard the surf, he thought he was hearing tanks from nearby Schofield Barracks. He and a half-dozen friends grabbed their surfboards, drove out to Makaha, and paddled into the surf. One by one, Noll's friends gave up and paddled back to shore.

With no cameras rolling and only a few friends as witnesses, Noll dropped into a 30-foot wave, rode it to the bottom, then stepped off his board into the raging surf. It was the largest wave ever ridden, a feat that would go unmatched for more than two decades. The experience was transformative. According to popular lore, the wave was so awesome, so life changing, that Noll walked away from surfing, never to surf again. Despite the story's appeal, it wasn't altogether correct; Noll continued to surf big waves for three more years. "I wrote a book and it came out wrong, like I stopped and that was it," says Noll. His fierce competitiveness and need to be the first rider on every big wave, however, was gone. "That bogeyman sitting on my shoulder went and sat on somebody else's shoulder," he says. "I think Laird's."

"When we started the production, one of the guys told me, 'Listen, homes, I'll give you all my support. But if you screw up, I'm gonna kick your ass,' " says Peralta. "That's the kind of thing I was dealing with."

After convincing Noll to participate in the film, Peralta went after Hamilton, who had been planning to make his own film about big-wave riding. Considered by many to be the greatest big-wave rider of all time, Hamilton had revolutionized the sport in 1992 with the introduction of tow-in surfing, a way of catching waves unreachable by conventional means. Using a jet ski and a water ski rope, Hamilton was towed directly into the path of waves too fast moving and far out from shore to paddle into. In August 2000, he caught a monstrous wave at Teahupo'o. The wave was the most massive ever ridden, breaking onto a shallow, razor-sharp reef. "No one had ever ridden a wave like that before," says Sam George, editor of *Surfer* magazine. "If you had to pick one ride, that one was the most significant." It was also the most dangerous. "If he had wiped out, it would have fuckin' killed him," says Noll. "There's no doubt in my mind. He would have been a red stain on the reef."

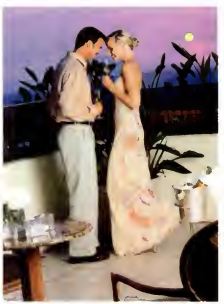
The ride solidified Hamilton's standing as the sport's alpha male, but Peralta's interviews revealed another side altogether. In the film he's a fatherless four-year-old looking for a dad, a blond haole kid who grew up wishing he was Hawaiian, a man who goes into deep depressions when there are no waves to surf. "If you don't understand all that other stuff, then he's just Tarzan," says Peralta. "There's Laird and there's the rest of us. But he still has fears in him where he feels smaller than he is, and it's because of those experiences growing up."

After securing Noll and Hamilton, Peralta went after Jeff Clark. If Hamilton is the Michael Jordan of big-wave riding, Clark is its Bill Laimbeer: little flash or name recognition but big and tough and fearless. While others in the sport were surfing with their friends in the warm, blue-green waters of Maui and Oahu, Clark was riding waves alone in the treacherous surf off Half Moon Bay, a small town in Northern California. Clark surfed the dangerous reef break for 15 years before he was able to convince anyone else that, yes, there were waves in Half Moon Bay, waves that rivaled the giants of the North Shore. Nicknamed Maverick's, the site became infamous for its sharks, cold waters, and unforgiving "boneyard," where broken boards and dislocated shoulders were commonplace.

Sandwiched between Noll's story and Hamilton's, Clark's part of the film is all wipeouts and near drownings. The reputation of Maverick's as one of the scariest surf spots in the world was secured when Mark Foo, considered one of the greatest Hawaiian surfers, died there in 1994. Clark has suffered con-

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cussions and dislocated ribs in its boneyard. In one section of the film, his leash gets caught on the reef and he's held underwater as onlookers watch from shore. "I've seen guys that have had wipeouts so bad here that they've never come back," says Clark. "They'll be like, 'I've got kids to raise. I really don't need to do this anymore.'"

DRIVE ALONG THE NORTH Shore stretch of Oahu's Kamehameha Highway and you'll pass many of the surf spots mentioned in *Riding Giants*, from Sunset Beach and Pipeline to Waimea Bay. Stop in the small town of Haleiwa and you'll find the H. Miura Store and Tailor Shop, established in 1918, whose proprietors stitched Noll's original jailhouse shorts. Ask nicely and Katherine

Fear, pain, near drownings, drills boring out your ear canal—they're all elements of a sport that longtime surfers describe as both an addiction and a love affair.

Kawaguchi, who was born in the back of the store in 1926, will show you some of Noll's old swatches (his latest pair of shorts measures 54½ inches in the waist). Amid the old sewing machines and surf contest posters are photos of Noll with Katherine and her sister, and one large poster that Noll autographed for the proprietors. "Greg didn't know how to spell *grandma*, so he asked his friend," says Kawaguchi. The inscription on the poster reads TO JANE, KATHY AND GRANDMAW, FROM YOUR FRIEND, GREG NOLL.

Walk past Matsumoto's Shave Ice Store and you'll hit Surf N Sea, a board and gear shop where the owner will try to talk you into taking a dip in a shark cage. Go to the back of the store and you'll hit the mother of surf film libraries, a huge case holding more than 300 titles. There's *Nibi*, a biopic about Kauaian surfer Titus Kinimaka, and



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TOW HEAD: Laird Hamilton catches a ride

Gidget Goes Hawaiian. There's *Big Wednesday* and *Step into Liquid*. There are two versions—the feature film and the documentary—of *Blue Crush*. In a year or so, *Riding Giants* will likely be here, too, alphabetically filed between *Push*, a 30-minute all-action video, and *Riding Waves*.

Peralta is aware of his cinematic predecessors and uses *Riding Giants* to skewer films like *Gidget* and *Ride the Wild Surf*. If they ever looked good, they look terrible now. It's not just the cornball dialogue or the preppy dorks in suits and ties, or even the terrible cinematography (viewing the films today, one wonders if the shots of actors like Frankie Avalon and Robert Stack "surfing" ever fooled anybody). No, it's because these films so often misunderstood the entire subculture. In Peralta's film, it's clear that these guys are outsiders yet deadly earnest about their sport. In dreck like 1964's *Muscle Beach Party*, they're actors trying to look like outsiders and failing miserably, pretty boys more interested in beer and bikinis than anything else. "It just makes me puke," Noll says in *Riding Giants*.

Ask the big-wave riders about their favorite films and they'll mention some of the classics. Clark liked *Sea Dreams* and *Five Summer Stories*. Hamilton liked *Pacific Vibrations*. They all loved Bruce Brown's classic 1966 documentary *The Endless Summer*, considered by many to be one of the finest films about surfing ever made. Its premise is simple: Two surfers travel the globe in search of the perfect wave, crisscrossing time zones and latitude lines so that they're always, as the title implies, in summer. While portions will make contemporary viewers cringe—the Africa trip, for example, features several jokes about cannibalism and one really offensive blackface moment—the surf scenes still stand up.

Nobody mentions *Blue Crush*, an otherwise enjoyable movie that fails to convince anyone, even with the most masterful of CGI effects, that lead actress Kate Bosworth ever competed at North Shore. That's the problem with a lot of Hollywood's attempts: If big-wave riding is all about fear, and we know these actors aren't actually out there experiencing that fear, where's the fun? Even with the advances in special effects, any willing suspension of disbelief is dashed on the cinematic reef by the frequent presence of real surfers in these films. Placed there supposedly as homages, the contrived scenes throwing surfers and actors together are embarrassing to both and pull one out of the film. *Blue Crush* is believable until pro surfer Keala Kennelly paddles over to give Bosworth a pep talk; similarly, John Milius's *Big Wednesday* founders when Gerry Lopez—Mr. Pipeline, for God's sake!—gazes admiringly at the big-wave heroics of, gulp, Jan-Michael Vincent.

Endless Summer and *Big Wednesday* aside, *Riding Giants* will probably be most often compared to Peralta's *Dogtown*, and that's not such a bad thing. *Dogtown* broke more

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ground than *Giants* in documenting an unexplored facet of Southern California (and it has that great moment when narrator Sean Penn flubs his line, then clears his throat and continues reading), but *Riding Giants*—with its trio of central characters—does what *Dogtown* and its 12 Z-Boys could not: It tells long, engaging stories about the individuals themselves. Noll is Da Bull, all "shits" and "goddamns" and sentimental memories, charging down waves in his big-waisted shorts. Clark is the loner, the guy who surfed Maverick's for 15 years when no one else would. Hamilton is the blond haole kid who showed them all by finding a dad, marrying model and pro beach volleyball player Gabrielle Reece, and riding the biggest, scariest wave of the century.

Riding Giants is a glorious film, at its best when capturing the spectacle of antsized humans getting pounded by waves that stretch end to end across the screen. Audiences grimace and ooh, then cheer, then grimace again. Listening to the surfers themselves—nice guys all—it's nearly impossible to see them as conceited jerks, the kind we would be if only we could do what they do.

Peralta and the others bemoan all the stuff that had to be rushed over and edited out to make the film comprehensible and under two hours. Several heroes of the sport had to be overlooked, most notably Eddie Aikau, a man considered a saint in his native Hawaii, a lifeguard and big-wave surfer who died in 1978 in an ill-fated ocean rescue attempt. The film also bypasses the prickly arguments over tow-in surfing, which purists consider to be a bastardization of the sport, not real surfing, and ecologically suspect besides. "There was a whole debate in our office—are we going to get into the tow-in-versus-non-tow-in controversy," says Peralta. "We had the material, but it just didn't fit into the spirit of the film."

"If he had wiped out, it would have killed him," says Noll. "There's no doubt in my mind. He would have been a red stain on the reef."

Riding Giants sold out four shows at Sundance, where Noll viewed the film for the first time. "I didn't know what to expect, and the next thing I see is this big fat guy with dribble coming out of his mouth, called Greg Noll, talking about surfing," he says. "I look over my shoulder and Robert Redford's sitting there. It wasn't real."

While Noll, Peralta, and the others were receiving standing ovations in Park City, Hamilton was in Maui, drawn by predictions of some of the biggest swells to hit Hawaii since Noll's ride of 1969. The waves never materialized, but that didn't matter to Hamilton. "I wasn't going to jeopardize missing the swell of the century," he says. "I figured I could always see the film." LA



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HEAR HEARS Tancharoen directed Britney Spears's 'Onyx Hotel' tour before her injury

I TURNED 20 ON APRIL 23RD," SAYS Kevin Tancharoen. "And it was weird for me. Whoa! What's going on? I am not a teenager anymore. I'm just another guy." You might agree, your thought bubble reading "Kevin who?" Ahh. So you're not down with the hip-hop world. You've lost touch with the Gen Y music video choreographers. Kevin T., as he's called, most recently directed Britney Spears's "Onyx Hotel" tour, a sellout until the singer's knee injury forced its cancellation. He directed the show's ancillary videos, including one featuring Jada Pinkett Smith as a mysterious chanteuse, and coordinated the sets, special effects, costumes, and lighting for what's known as a 12-truck event—meaning it requires a dozen 18-wheelers to put on. He choreographed Spears's "Me Against the Music" video with Madonna and directed Michael Jackson's 45th birthday party at the Orpheum last year. Merv Adelson, the 74-year-old founder of Lorimar, which produced such seminal entertainment as *Dallas* and *Knot's Landing*, hired Tancharoen to direct his latest venture, *JammX Kids*, a dance instruction video aimed at youngsters that's disguised as a slick TV-style sitcom. "The kid is going places," says Adelson, who's in a position to gauge such things.

Tancharoen is modest. He will, for example, refer to *You Got Served*, this year's popular battle-of-the-dance-crews movie, without mentioning that he's in it doing high kicks and back flips he learned from his training in *capoeira*, the dance–martial art hybrid from Brazil. "I didn't even know he knew capoeira until I saw him in rehearsals," says his agent, Tony Selznick, an ex-dancer who met Tancharoen when he was five. Tancharoen's stint with Michael Jackson comes up when a visitor asks about a plaque hanging near his desk that commemorates the occasion. "Oh, yeah," he says. "He was nice. He has a very soft voice. He thanked us."

As a dancer-choreographer-director, Tancharoen is a triple threat. But he's also a techno-geek who conjures complicated visual effects on his computer. He remixes music, adding the sound effects that performers use to punctuate their live shows. He can handle a budget. "I think that's what separates me a little," he says. "It's great to be creative and artistic, but in the end you have a lot of people who want to be sure you know what you're doing with their money. You have to know what's a franchise and what's marketable. I worked on the tour merchandise with Britney, and it broke an all-time record. That's going to make your project more

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PHOTOGRAPH BY **MICHAEL KELLEY**

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Tancharoen is a newly minted example of a growing phenomenon in the pop music world: the teenage dancer turned director-choreographer. It happens because the artists get to know the dancers and take a chance on them, according to Selznick, a partner in McDonald Selznick Associates. Barry Lather was an early pioneer, a dancer tapped by Janet Jackson to direct videos for her 1986 *Control* album. Then came Jamie King, Madonna's wunderkind who, at 32, is now considered a grand old master. Wade Robson, plucked from his home in Australia at age five to dance with Michael Jackson, is another more recent member of the species. He has choreographed and directed for Usher, Spears, *NSYNC, and Pink. His MTV show, *The Wade Robson Project*, a sort of *Star Search* for the let's-spin-on-our-heads dance set, wrapped this spring. He is 21.

Robson has had a large influence on Tancharoen's career. The two met when Robson was 11 and teaching a dance class in Hollywood that Tancharoen, then 10, attended. Afterward, the story goes, Robson ran up to the Tancharoens' car, tapped on the window, and asked if Kevin wanted to be in the dance troupe he was starting for kids. "When things are meant to happen," Tancharoen says, "they happen."

The two became friends, and their troupe danced in showcases around the world. The boys bought matching drum machines to celebrate their success. Tancharoen's, now surrounded by more sophisticated equipment, still has pride of place beside his desk. "It's a reminder," he says. The rest of the sentence, although unuttered, probably sounds like "not to get too uppity."

In 1999, when Robson was choreographing the *NSYNC and Spears performance at the Video Music Awards, he brought on his pal Tancharoen, a tenth grader at Montclair College Prep, as a dancer. The next year Tancharoen was hoofing it on Spears's "Oops I Did It Again" tour with the A-Teens, a Swedish pop band. "I went around the world on a bus and a plane," he says. "It was fun. Thank God I was a responsible kid. For me it was a touring school. In rehearsal I would sit with every department and watch just to see how it was all put together. That was my learning ground. I didn't speak my mind, I just watched."

TANCHAROEN LIVES IN A LEAFY residential section of Van Nuys, where he built a studio apartment on his family's property. His room is neat but comfortable, a bed dressed in muted colors in one corner, a sitting area nearby, his computer station overseen by an oil painting of a Venice canal. His mother, Mini, an artist, and father, Tommy, a transportation coordinator for movies, are both from Bangkok but met in the United States more than 30 years ago. His older sister, Mauris-



DANCE CLASS: The director on the 'JammX Kids' video set

GLENN CAMPBELL


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sa, is a screenwriter and also lives at home, as do the three family dogs and a cat. On a recent afternoon, Tancharoen is wearing jeans, a fitted Banana Republic pin-striped blazer, a white button-down shirt with itinerant black flowers, and worn rubber-soled boots. His dark hair has been highlighted with streaks of blond, and a few totems, including a silver cross, hang from leather ties around his neck. His manner and mien are the opposite of loud, but it's clear that Tancharoen has a knack for getting noticed. He played classical piano at five, had a black belt in karate at eight, and learned to Rollerblade within a few hours of deciding he wanted to. "I think once a child is successful," Mini muses in an oblique explanation for her son's focus and drive, "they want to keep it up."

When her son went on tour at 14, "I was a nervous wreck," Mini says, "but I had a cell phone and I called him all the time. And I knew the kids he was with, so that helped." The family has always been close. At home they watch movies together, from *Reservoir Dogs* to Japanese *anime*. Kevin's sister was in a Motown group, Pretty in Pink, started by Chaka Khan's daughter. Kevin tagged along to her dance classes and mimicked the steps. "My mom saw I had some rhythm," he says, and so began the classes with Robson. "At first I liked it because it made me look cool at school," he says. Tommy introduced his son to the power of high-budget artifice. "I used to hang around movie sets with him," says Tancharoen, who was seven when he stepped into the eerie world of *Batman Returns*. "That's where my fascination with Tim Burton started. I am very heavy on production design—his sets are half of his movie." In sixth grade, Tancharoen's class was asked to write biographies. "Everybody was doing Helen Keller and Martin Luther King," he says. "I did mine on Quentin Tarantino." The next year he chose Robert Rodriguez, director of *From Dusk till Dawn* and the *Spy Kids* movies. He studied Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction* and Rodriguez's book *Rebel Without a Crew*. "Rodriguez is the Steadicam operator, he edits, he does the scoring," Tancharoen says. "He can do everything."

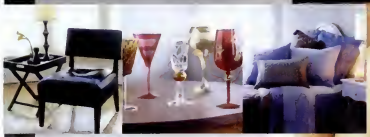
So, increasingly, did Tancharoen. With successive projects, like *NSYNC's 2001 "Pop Odyssey" tour, on which he was Robson's technical assistant, he layered each new discovery on top of the last and parsed the disciplines of lighting, sound, choreography, special effects, and music—and personalities. When it came time to choreograph Spears's "Me Against the Music" video, Tancharoen's characteristic equanimity was jeopardized. "Britney was my pal," he says. "Madonna, on the other hand, is Madonna. Nothing else you can say about that. Of course, I go in there with the confidence I have to have, but I thought, Is she gonna just like look at me and think '*kid*'?" Apparently not. Mrs. Ritchie was easy and collaborative, Tancharoen reports. "But she has such a dry sense of humor. You think, Is she making fun of me—or not?"

The Spears tour gave Tancharoen the chance to put everything he'd learned into one package. Brought on in January to replace the show's second director, he worked with Spears to create the "Onyx Hotel" theme. "Coming from a movie lover's background, I wanted to make it seem like a film," he says. "A little Joel Schumacher meets Tim Burton." He pulled together a "bible," required reading for the department heads, that included sequencing, sketches, storyboards, and referential art from movie stills. Each lighting cue got a color-coded highlight. The onyx, it's explained onstage, symbolizes untapped desire. The Onyx Hotel, a *Twilight Zone*–style enclave, is the place to express it. The show was criticized for being too sexy for its young teen audience, but to Tancharoen (who gets credit for nixing the cheek-baring leather chaps costume) the point was that it had a story line, that it was more than an unconnected series of musical numbers.

He got to expand his use of plot with the *JammX Kids* project. "I went back to all my references as a little kid: *Ghostbusters*, *Power Rangers*, *Ninja Turtles*," he says. "What was it about those three things I loved? The characters and their relationships with each other." *JammX* stars eight-year-old, three-foot-tall Bobb'e Thompson, from NBC's *Tracy Morgan Show*, as Master Groove, a potentate with magical powers, a jeweled baton for initiating them, and a comically irascible delivery. He oversees a do-good brigade of talented young dancers who make it their mission to turn nerds into cool kids. It's a story line that should feel quite familiar to Kevin Tancharoen. LA

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LONGTIME ACTIVIST WILLIE CAMPBELL HAS CHANGED AMERICAN POLITICS, ONE CUP OF TEA AT A TIME BY KAREN WADA

EIGHTY-NINE-YEAR-OLD WILLIE Campbell is sitting in her living room, pouring tea from a fine china pot. The walls of her Bunker Hill condo are filled with mementos, including dozens of photos of her with the famous and the soon-to-be-famous: Here's Ann Richards. There's Hillary Rodham Clinton. Huge windows open onto magnificent views of downtown and the Hollywood Hills. Campbell herself is immaculately dressed, wearing full makeup, a knit pantsuit, and earrings—even though she is spending a day at home. Looking good is important, she explains.

In her case, looks are also deceiving. Campbell, you see, is no country club dowager, nor is she a Pamela Harriman–style socialite turned influence broker. An Ohio girl from a modest Republican home, she married a doctor and had three children at a time when as a wife and mother she never felt quite right about starting a career. Instead, she became what one daughter calls "Chief Volunteer," an unlikely but powerful crusader for social justice. In the 1960s, Campbell battled to open elections to blacks in some of the toughest inner cities. In the '70s, she helped train early waves of female candidates in towns across the country. For the past three decades, while her friends have retired to lives of leisure, she has traveled remote parts of the world to help create jobs for village wives.

"It doesn't matter if she's in a boardroom with members of Congress or out in a little place in Africa, Willie Campbell is a force to be reckoned with," says investment banker Ernest G. Green, who has worked with her on international aid projects. A man who knows about quiet courage—he was among the students who integrated Little Rock's Central High in 1957—Green calls Campbell the classic unsung hero: "All of the changes we've seen—civil rights, world development—could not have come about without somebody like Willie."

Indeed, while history usually favors those who make speeches or headlines, no great leader or movement could exist without its invisible fixers and confidants, enablers and muses. Campbell's value to the causes she champions is clear. Exactly what she has done to support them, however, can get lost behind the scenes or in the heat of a moment. "I just do what's needed," she says. "Not everyone understands how important that is."

Campbell's genial nature makes it easy to forget the pivotal debates she has won with her keen intellect. Her knack for building

CHIEF VOLUNTEER: Willie Campbell is a force to be reckoned with

PHOTOGRAPH BY MAX S. GERBER

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Instead, it's straight to Caesars Palace for a martini and Stellar Bay Oysters at Bradley Ogden, followed by a raucous evening at Elton John's The Red Piano.

After that, more cocktails and much mixing. Glances are exchanged. Phone numbers are traded. And promises are made. "Meet me poolside in two weeks," she says. "I'll be the one in the pink bikini. And the mischievous grin."

And people wonder why you're such a Vegas Guy.

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unlikely alliances and organizing anything (meetings, fund-raising drives) has brought credibility and money to many a struggling campaign. She has inspired three generations of political and civil rights figures, always ready to provide strategic advice or a phone number from her formidable address book. As required, she has also delivered direct but gentle kicks in the behind, always accompanied by butter cookies and a cup of tea.

"Hers is not a name known by many," says Jan Piercy, who has worked with Campbell on women's political education programs. "But if you talk to the people who were seen as being key to an era, you find Willie figures somewhere in their lives." Piercy, former U.S. executive director of the World Bank, recalls her Wellesley classmate Clinton speaking "memorably and movingly" at Campbell's 80th-birthday party. The then first lady "talked about what it meant to her as a young law student, knowing someone who stood beside those who didn't have a voice," Piercy says.

"Willie took the student leaders of the '60s seriously," says Clinton, now a U.S. senator from New York. "She understood our passion and impatience for our country to achieve a 'more perfect union,' and she supported our activism. She was and is an inspiration to me and many others in her unflagging engagement, in her respect for all points of view, in her commitment to civil rights and justice, in her grace and wit, and in her great gift for enduring friendships."

Campbell may keep a low profile, but that doesn't mean she's ducking. She has held her own on hostile streets and in even more hostile hearing rooms. Campbell pushed the League of Women Voters to pioneer the once-controversial use of litigation (as opposed to legislation) to challenge social inequities. Against the advice of many, she moved to Los Angeles in 1971 for the same reason she went anywhere—a good fight—so her husband, Jack, could help start a hospital and medical school in Watts after the riots. A prominent Indiana University radiologist, he came to California one year earlier to set up his department at the new King/Drew Medical Center. One night when he was stopped at a light, a boy got into his car and then asked for a ride. Jack agreed, but as he headed off, a man jumped into the backseat and held a knife to his throat. Jack escaped by slamming on the brakes and leaping out. Later, he called his wife and described his ordeal. Her response: "You know you shouldn't leave your doors unlocked."

Jack smiles when he hears the story. To him, this is the essence of Willie, passionate and pragmatic: "Here she has her husband engaged in an important mission, helping



PARTY PEOPLE: Hillary Clinton congratulates Campbell at her 80th-birthday celebration

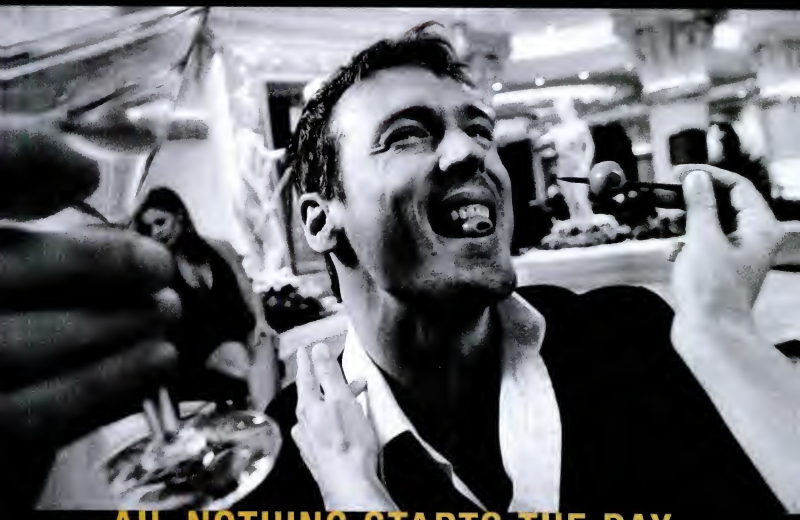
people who really needed it. She just wanted to sustain the idea that the job was more important than this little mishap."

CAMPBELL LIKES TO POINT OUT that she shares her birthday, August 26, with the 19th Amendment, which, in 1920, gave American women the right to vote. (She is five years older.) "People ask if I'm surprised by all the changes during my life," she says. "Well, I always figured that women, who had the same capacity as men, and blacks, who are the same as whites—that one day they would have their own movements and I would be part of them."

Willie Grace Dickins grew up in Cincinnati, the second child of a canned-goods salesman and a housewife. Her older sister, Blanche, was a Jazz Age beauty with a head for numbers. Theirs was a conventional (read conservative) Republican household, although their father did tell his daughters not to let gender keep them from fulfilling their dreams. Their mother, who lived to be 96, "eventually changed her mind about many things," Campbell says, "but she did have a lot of

COURTESY WILLIE CAMPBELL

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stereotypes, including racial ones, early on."

Campbell studied sociology at the University of Cincinnati, where "the whole big world opened up. It was my religious experience." Her most important discovery: "I learned that race has no scientific basis. It's irrelevant." She received her bachelor's degree as a Phi Beta Kappa in three years. Jack, who was a medical student when they were engaged, started an internship in Detroit. To be near him, Campbell attended the University of Michigan and earned a master's in sociology. They were married in 1938, moved to Indianapolis, and had three children during World War II. Soon after peace was declared, Campbell joined the League of Women Voters, which was one of the few outlets for civic activism.

"When I was in graduate school, I wanted to be another Margaret Mead," Campbell says. "With the war and so on, that didn't work out. In those days you didn't try to carry both a career and raise children, so I joined the League. It was serious volunteer work, and in terms of my life I wanted to do something serious."

Campbell was a local board member, then became Indiana state president in 1954. She went to the national board in 1959, serving off and on until 1972. In the early '60s, she became chair of the education fund.

As civil rights demonstrations flared up around the nation, Campbell pushed the League "to get into the fray." She realized that her colleagues were "effective at getting people to vote—as long as they were middle class and white" but had trouble understanding the needs of people unlike themselves. At board meetings she kept turning attention to helping the inner cities. In response, she heard lots of questions about how to do it.

"She has tremendous energy. Even in the densest, most remote places, Willie can walk up hills faster than anyone 30 or 40 years her junior," says Ernest G. Green.

Finally, Campbell was able to start six voter education projects, from Indianapolis to New Orleans. Initially, she says, community leaders balked, skeptical of what they saw as an invasion by society matrons. While the Sears Roebuck Foundation offered support, other philanthropic agencies refused. Campbell's first meeting with another foundation ended after an African American staff member told her, "You don't need the money. It's for black people to do it themselves."

"I thought about storming out," Campbell recalls. "Then I said, 'You may not want us, but we're going to do it anyway.'" (Later, she notes, the foundation funded the League's litigation department.)

At the League's 1970 young leaders' conference in Colorado, a group of angry men (in the confusion, no one found out who they were) barged into a meal session because

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then-boycotted grapes were being served. As dishes flew and delegates retreated for cover, Campbell walked over to the intruders and talked with such sincerity and candor that she calmed them and even got some to join the event.

"Many people would have called armed guards and thrown them in jail," says Fay H. Williams, who attended the gathering. "Willie could always bring people together."

She is "definitely not one of your do-gooder types," says Williams, who was a social worker and self-described "rabble-rouser" when she met Campbell during the Indianapolis voter drive. "That means Willie doesn't just do what she thinks is best. She is willing to look at things from other points of view." Williams, now an attorney, found many of Campbell's peers in socially liberal movements to be condescending or oblivious to what made Campbell special: "They never understood that Willie's behavior was different."

On the other hand, Campbell—a voracious student of politics and people—is always aware of the subtext of a discussion and how to use it to her advantage. "We would joke that she looked so Waspy that she could say something very radical and it would not come off that way," says Williams, who is black. "Her savvy helped her to know when I should say it and when she should say it. You can't get anything by her."

During the '70s, Campbell got involved with the National Women's Education Fund, the arm of the National Women's Political Caucus that assisted fledgling candidates.

Betsey Wright, the brash Texas political organizer and future aide to Bill Clinton, had been asked to be the education fund's executive director but dreaded the idea of raising money. "Willie solved that problem," says Jan Piercy, then the fund's chair and now an adviser to ShoreBank Corporation. "She told her, 'People give to people. They don't give to organizations. There's a whole way to present yourself.' Betsey didn't care too much about clothes, but Willie took her in hand. Now Betsey is the consummate fund-raiser."

"I grabbed on to her as a mentor as soon as I met her," says Wright, who lives in Arkansas and broke a long ban on talking to reporters to discuss Campbell. "Willie gave me the courage to try all kinds of things I hadn't done before. She also knew what you had to do to back up your policy ideas with groundwork."

Campbell joined the League's Overseas Education Fund at a time in the '70s when it was focusing on Africa. She and her colleagues quickly decided that money talks: If women could make money, men would pay attention. They also emphasized legal as well as financial empowerment. "We created Women, Law and Development Programs that eventually became the most important program OEF had," Campbell says.

While history usually favors those who make speeches or headlines, no great leader or movement could exist without its invisible fixers and confidants, enablers and muses.

In the early '90s, President Clinton named Campbell vice chair of the African Development Foundation, which promotes grassroots programs. Ernest Green was the choice for chair but was concerned about his workload as a managing director of Lehman Brothers in Washington, D.C. He was told Campbell could help out. Later, he admitted that he was surprised—and dubious—when he first saw her.

"You wonder if they just put some senior citizen in to occupy the slot," he says. "Then you learn she's such a jewel. She has tremendous energy. Even in the densest, most remote places, Willie can walk up hills faster than anyone 30 or 40 years her junior. Also, Willie is one of the few people in the world who could drop into almost any group and establish herself and then establish common goals for the group. She has this rich history that she brings, but she also knows so much about the present and has a vision about where things should be for the future."

Just as she was getting involved in African affairs, the Campbells moved to Los Angeles, settling in a high-rise, where they still

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live, near the Music Center. While Jack worked at King/Drew, Campbell flew overseas and around the United States, spending so much time in Washington that she kept an apartment there. Although she didn't have time for local politics, she tapped into its more interesting circles. One example was the Bunker Hill Lunch Bunch. "We were women, not yet known, who talked about our aspirations," says lobbyist Maureen Kindel. "Willie and I were there, as was Maxine Waters, who was working for a councilman, Kathleen Brown, who was a housewife, and Diane Watson, who was a schoolteacher. This was in the '70s, so you can see how far we've come."

Neighbors Kindel and Campbell first met in the elevator of their building three decades ago. Then an attorney's wife in her thirties, Kindel had recently arrived from New York and had started to join local philanthropic boards. "Willie felt these were good but tame activities for me," she says. "She thought I should be devoting myself to more cutting-edge and controversial issues." So Kindel became the finance chair of Mayor Tom Bradley's first reelection effort. After he won, she spent eight years as the city's commissioner of public works before starting an influential lobbying firm. "Willie was bold enough to sit me down and say 'no, no' and tell me I had to do something different," Kindel says. "I feel she is part of what I've accomplished every day."

In December 2002, Campbell had trouble breathing and was rushed to the hospital, where she was found to be suffering from two leaking heart valves. She insisted on surgery, telling family and friends she didn't want to be an invalid.

"My mother is not just a glass-half-full person but a glass-pouring-over person," says her eldest child, Nancy Duff Campbell, cofounder of the National Women's Law Center. "She always looks for the good things or the best possible things in any situation. She was saying that if there's something to try, let's try it."

Since the operation, Campbell has slowed a bit. She let go of the East Coast apartment, but she still travels, especially for the African Development Foundation, of which she is acting chair. In L.A. she attends a, for her, moderate schedule of meetings and dinner parties—thanks to her husband and friends, who take her around town because she gave up driving nearly a decade ago. She also keeps the teapot ready.

"I'll always be action oriented," Campbell says, calling from Washington during a recent business trip. "Even if I were in a wheelchair, I think I'd be doing something. As you get older you have to adjust to certain things, but I know I'll always be interested in how society can work better.

"One thing I've also come to see," she adds, "is that it's almost fortuitous that I ended up doing volunteer work instead of getting a job. I'm not bound by particular obligations. I can follow my own motivations—which don't rely on God or anyone but are based on my belief that we really have to resolve our problems ourselves.

"No one else is going to help us," she says. "It's that simple." LA



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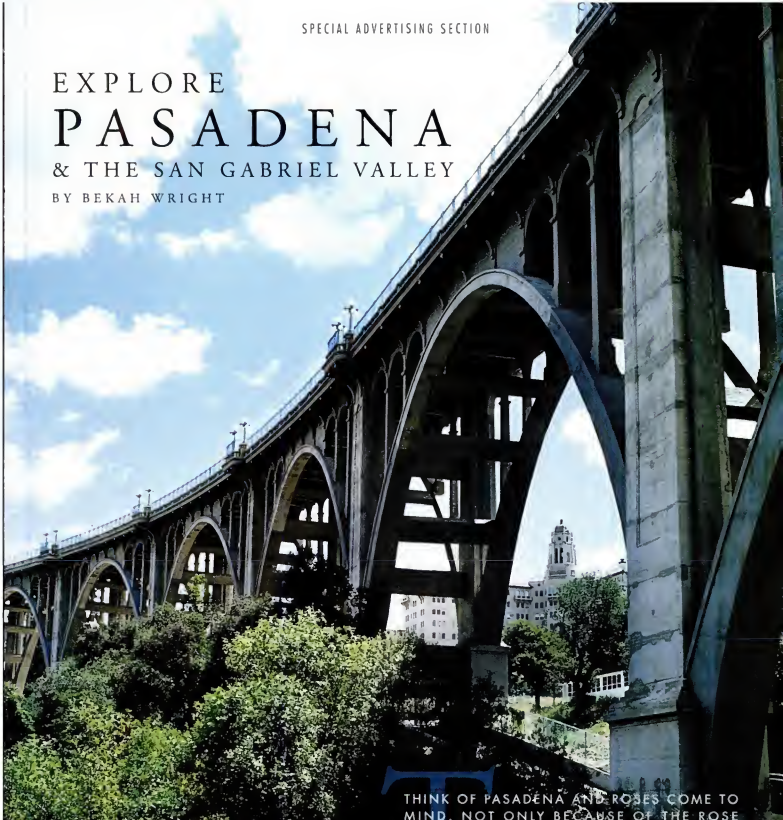
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BY BEKAH WRIGHT



THINK OF PASADENA AND ROSES COME TO MIND. NOT ONLY BECAUSE OF THE ROSE BOWL AND RENOWNED ROSE PARADE BUT FOR THE ROMANCE THAT ABOUNDS IN THIS QUAINT CITY. FOR A ROMANTIC WEEKEND GETAWAY, PASADENA IS WAITING TO SWEEP you off your feet with its top-notch hotels, museums and gardens, shopping, restaurants, and entertainment. Can't decide what to do first? The Pasadena Convention and Visitors Bureau is there to help. Together with local hotels and museums it has designed four weekend getaway packages to help visitors experience the best of Pasadena. Whether you make your own itinerary or choose one of theirs, time spent in Pasadena is sure to be memorable.

GETTING AROUND TOWN

Knowing the lay of the land will help you cover as much ground as possible during your visit. Start at the western end of this corridor of districts and make your way through Old Pasadena, Paseo Colorado, the Playhouse District, and the South Lake District. To make it even easier, the ARTS—Area Rapid Transit System—bus will take you between districts for a 50-cent fare.

HIDEAWAYS

The five area hotels chosen for the Pasadena Convention and Visitors Bureau's weekend getaways stand out not only for their convenient locations but for their creature comforts. For the most part, car keys can be handed over to the valet for the duration of your stay, as Pasadena was made for walking. Closest to the various districts are the Hilton Pasadena, the Westin Pasadena, Sheraton Pasadena Hotel, and Old Pasadena Courtyard by Marriott. Off the beaten path is the Ritz-Carlton, Huntington Hotel and Spa. Located in a residential area on Oak Knoll Avenue, this 1907 landmark is a return to California's golden era. Slumber in a suite or corner room and you'll awaken to views of gardens and the San Gabriel Mountains.



MUSEUMS & GARDENS

Falling in love with Pasadena's architecture is a given. If you've caught the bug, visit some of its famous mansions. The Gamble House, designed by Greene and Greene in 1908, has become known as the masterpiece of the Arts and Crafts movement. Guided tours ensure you won't miss a single intricate detail—from its stained glass to the various types of wood used.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections & Botanical Gardens are on a 150-acre eclectic mix of gardens including a desert garden conservancy and Japanese, Shakespeare, and rose gardens. Spend some time in the Huntington Gallery for a gander at Gainsborough's The Blue Boy and Lawrence's Pinkie. In the Virginia Steele Scott Gallery you'll see works by John Singer Sargent, Edward Hopper, and Mary Cassatt. Other exhibits to check out include those in the Arabella Huntington Memorial Collection in the library and the MaryLou and George Boone Gallery.

Walk through the live oaks of Descanso Gardens and you'll be surrounded by a multitude of camellias. Of course, you'll find other flowers, including tulips, roses, azaleas, and orchids. Sighting wildlife is a fun venture in the 165-acre gardens, from ducks on the pond to birds seen via the Bird Observation Station. If you're lucky, you may spot a veiled bride making her way down the aisle near the Japanese Teahouse.

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With world-class shopping, renowned museums and exciting nightlife, Pasadena is the perfect weekend getaway. To make planning even easier, the Pasadena Convention & Visitors Bureau offers incredible weekend packages, including Cultural Collage, Celebrate Pasadena-style and Pasadena Dreaming: An Antique Lover's Reality. The packages include a two-night hotel stay, in-room amenity basket, passes to select museums, entertainment options, meals and much more. To book a Weekend Package, visit www.experiencepasadena.com or call toll free 800-805-4604.

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SHOPPING

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There are 200 shops and restaurants in the 22-square-block area known as Old Pasadena. Just down the street is Paseo Colorado, an urban shopping village designed in keeping with the heritage of the community. Stained glass, metal, and steel components set off the gold, green, and rust colors of this two-level shopping center designed as a mix between the Arts and Crafts and Mediterranean styles. Included in Paseo



Colorado are 65 street-front specialty stores and 8 restaurants. On Friday nights through the summer you'll hear live music in Garfield Promenade. Take in a film at the Pacific 14, followed by dinner at Delmonico's Seafood Grille. The 1920s "art deco San Francisco"–inspired restaurant is alluring for those on a date. Share some sweet potato tortellini with lobster on the outside and an almond cream sauce in one of the establishment's intimate booths, just right for canoodling.

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If visuals are your thing, visit Interior Devine in the Playhouse District's Singer Sewing Machine Building. An interior design showroom, it specializes in antique prints, museum-quality framing, and unique accessories for the home. In addition to carrying works from printers like Piranesi and rare collections like nature-printed

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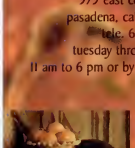
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seaweeds, owner Paul Devine strives to offer works that put a contemporary twist on the traditional. A new collection has evolved from Devine's own work with the Pasadena Showcase—life-size hand-cut dog silhouettes. Fine linens and exquisite dinner wear pull the components of home décor together. At Salutations Home, beyond furniture, home accessories and lighting, they offer distinctive "finishing touches" such as fine linens from Yves Delorme and Sferra Bros. to dinner wear by Vietri and Quimper. Finding the perfect gift while there is an added bonus from specialized stationary to a baby department well stocked with Lilly Pulitzer designs.

If being surrounded by Pasadena's romantic environment inspires you to tie the knot, spend some time in one of the R·Mine Bridal Couture boutiques, located in both Glendale and Studio City. Along with the custom-made bridal and evening gowns designed by Armine Ohanessian, R·Mine Bridal Couture offers extraordinary collections from European and American couture designer brands, exquisite accessories, and tuxedos. The Glendale location carries the Rose Collection from Reem Acra, Rahmanian Couture, Eugenia, Saison Blanche Couture, Pronovias, St. Patrick, La Sposa, and an affordable couture line made exclusively for R·Mine Bridal Couture. The Studio City location also features couture designers such as Oscar De La Renta, Romona Keveza, Carmela Sutera, Domo Adami, Amsali, Pronovias, Elie by Elie Saab, Hannibal Laguna, Manuel Mota, Lydia Delgado, and Miguel Palacio.

SPAS

Relaxation goes hand in hand with spa visits. In Pasadena there are many outstanding spas to choose from, including medical day spas, which are gaining in popularity among those who want not only to be pampered but to have in-depth treatments and work on problem areas. Falling into this category is Z Med Spa, which offers oxygen-infused facials, acne photoclearance, and microdermabrasion. Advanced Laser Clinics of Pasadena, inviting with its earth tones, waterfall wall, soothing music, and plush robes, offers clients customized medical-grade skin-care treatments, laser hair removal, photo rejuvenation, Botox, and Restylane.

ENTERTAINMENT

A natural place to seek out entertainment is the Playhouse District, named after California's official state theater, the Pasadena Playhouse. Upcoming shows include Vincent in Brixton and the rock and

roll musical Why Do Fools Fall in Love? New to the Playhouse District is the Boston Court, a 99-seat theater offering audiences both the classics and works by new playwrights.

As your weekend ends, you'll realize you've barely scratched the surface when it comes to things you want to see, do, and experience in Pasadena. The great thing about weekends, though—there's always another one just around the corner, waiting to take you on another adventure in romantic Pasadena.

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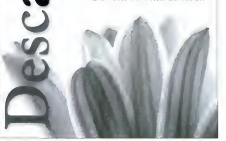
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ELON SCHOENHOLZ

NEW BAR

The Hollywood bar boom of the last decade has passed. Like William Mulholland almost a century ago, booze barons with empire in mind are venturing into a thirsty Valley. Since Firefly first blinked its lights on a dark stretch of Ventura Boulevard, several new taprooms have appeared, like Studio City's Sapphire, a wood-paneled drawing room with dim lighting the color of Jamaican rum, and—just down the block—Clear, with its airy, succulent-hemmed patio. NoBar in North Hollywood is straight out of Michael Mann's head, where L.A.'s past juts through the raw present; the remodeled bar, immaculately wrapped in self-consciously cheap velvet wallpaper, still carries the feel of the piss hole it once was. Yet it's in Eagle Rock's comfy **Chalet** where everything drops into place like a fresh ice cube. The bar is a woodsy descendant of West Hollywood's north, with a mile-long couch set before a fieldstone fireplace, medieval lighting exuding a rusty glow, and heavy, rough-hewn ceiling beams that look freshly torn from a 19th-century Provincetown tavern. The quiet hideaway's peace is never broken by its populist crowd, the same group you'd find at closing time at Trader Joe's: art students, teachers, struggling musicians, landscape designers, hot-rod mechanics. It's a place of the American imagination, with Gentleman Jack on tap and Johnny Cash on the jukebox.



HOT DOG

Long the most famous hot dog stand in Los Angeles, **Pink's** doesn't need us to hawk its franks. We'd rather be provocative, or at least counterintuitive, which is to say that the 65-year-old Hollywood institution had to work twice as hard to live up to its legend. It had to rise above the sausage temples of Ventura Boulevard, from Rubin's Red Hot to the Stand to the excellent if unfortunately named Wienery. It had to wow us with a dog that was juicy and fiery and garlicky and chewy, even after we had consumed enough nitrates to dope a small elephant. In our defense, Pink's signature chili-cheese dog (the Original Tommy's Burger of tube steak) didn't do it. But one taste of the spicy Polish and we knew—or better yet, we could hear. The casing was so taut, so perfectly elastic and resistant, that every bite was an explosion, the snap audible from all the way across the table.



VINTAGE BATHROOM FIXTURES

Since the nesting boom began, bathrooms, like kitchens, have been expanding, not just in square footage but in mystique. Installing original Crane fixtures or an elephant's trunk toilet bowl can spell the difference between redecorating a classic bungalow and restoring it. Yards like Freeway Wrecking and Santa Fe Wrecking are good options for old tubs and sinks. If it's a rare copper-and-cork-lined zinc tub or a narrow endive-shaped sink meant to be shoehorned into a broom closet, **Square Deal Plumbing & Heating Supplies** is the journeyman's choice. Adam Zieve has accumulated two centuries' worth of taps, faucets, valve stems, escutcheons, and swing spouts—the works. He can furnish pristine rolled-lip cast-iron soakers and a sparkling chrome set of cabriolet lavatory legs. Says Zieve, "I never believe I'll tell anyone I don't have it."

BOARD SHORTS

When those off-the-rack Billabong shorts just don't cut it, there's only one solution: a pair of custom drawstring board shorts from **Hydro Lab**, a stylish den of surf fashion with retro tendencies. Made-to-order designs aren't cheap—they start at around $125—but there are dozens of fabrics to mix and match, including neon orange urethane-coated nylon, silver-metallic camouflage, and classic tartan. Want the side pocket in a contrasting color? How about bright red stitching? Want to lose the side pocket altogether? Say please. The shorts may never touch ocean water, but no one has to know that.



FIXTURES: GRETTA MAGEE; SHORTS: LISA ROBERTSON

5

Attaché Cases

Has that knapsack gone kaput? Make the trip to H. Savinar Luggage. Major brands like Tumi, Bellino, and Kenneth Cole are well represented among the store's travel bags, and there are a few stylish designs from Los Angeles maker Lodis as well. For the most dramatic bargains, check out the display cases brimming with samples.

★

6

Home Theater Installer

Lee Entertainment founder Joseph Lee has been wiring homes with the sharpest pictures and the punchiest sound for more than two decades. His company can equip a den with an HDTV home theater or amp an entire house with satellite music—or both. Either way, don't forget the Nordost speaker cable. It starts at $400 a foot.

★

7

Gift Baskets

Whether we need to show a little love or kiss major butt, Star Treatment delivers—in a jiffy, too. They'll assemble snazzy beach totes filled with candy-colored towels (monogrammed, or not), leather doctor's bags with cigars and whiskey, and supersoft microchenille robes with David Gate Quince bath products. They also do custom orders.

8
Soul Food

Soul food joints rarely disappoint—in part because they aren't trying to impress. They offer comfort and preserve tradition, nourishing something deep within. Eating at Flossie's, a Delta shrine in a Torrance minimall, makes us want to hug someone. The fried chicken is a work of love, the chilled banana pudding worth a letter home.

★

9
Threading

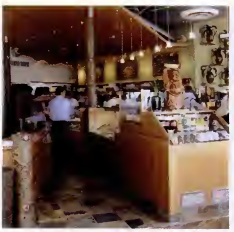
Using just a loop of thread, Michelle Ornstein, owner of Enessa Aromatherapy, makes unwanted body and facial hair vanish. Ornstein, who trains aestheticians around the country, is a master of threading, a Middle Eastern practice that we prefer to waxing for two reasons: It's more precise and it doesn't rip off a layer of skin.

★

10
Bed Linens

Department store linens can be nice, but they're nothing compared with the sewn-to-order sheets, pillowcases, duvets, and blankets at Statements. They stock hundreds upon hundreds of sumptuous fabrics, including 1,000-plus-thread-count cottons, jewel-toned silks, even buttery faux suede from lines such as Archipelago, Bonjour, and Susan Unger.

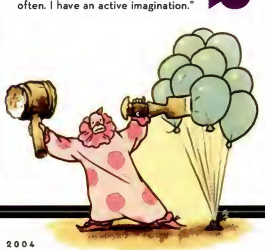
GOURMET CAFETERIA



It's not what it sounds like—steam tables of puckered gray peas, thinly sliced mystery meats, and baked spaghetti. Oh no. This is supreme easy-access breakfast and lunch fare that we'd drive to an office park to fetch. Chefs Josiah Citrin (Mélisse) and Raphael Lunetta (JiRaffe) teamed up to open **Lemon Moon** in West L.A., and they're both on hand making breakfasts of fresh pastries, cereals, and creative egg dishes, and lunches of beautiful salads (fresh beet, skirt steak, shrimp ceviche), sandwiches (turkey with caramelized onions and *manchego*, portobello with red pepper aioli and goat cheese cream), and soups. Eat in at a communal picnic table or out on the patio, or order online and take your favorites back to your lair.

BALLOON SCULPTOR

If you've ever been to the Hollywood Farmers Market, you've seen **John Buckner**. He's the guy in the middle of a tight circle of children, the one with the brightly colored spider—or bird, or alligator—on his head. Buckner supports himself entirely by twisting balloons into wacky shapes. He's been on TV, doing his thing in the background on a recent episode of *Monk*. But mostly he works birthday parties and other functions, where he can see kids' faces as he turns a "260"—the special balloon he uses, which is two inches around and 60 inches long—into a train, a troll, or Tweety Bird. "I have people who like to play Stump the Balloon Guy," he says. Do they win? "Not very often. I have an active imagination."





SODA

From the outside, **Galco's Soda Pop Stop** is a modestly proportioned market on an ordinary street in a nondescript suburb. But the inside is impossibly larger: Row after row of regional and artisanal colas stretching into the distance and lovingly arranged by category and brand. We came upon the shockingly neon Frostie Blue Cream Soda (given a run for its money by Jolt Electric Blue and Jones Blue Bubble Gum); Fukola, which we bought for its name; and the imported German Africola, which tastes like Rommel's sweat socks. Pirate's Keg? Of course they have Pirate's Keg! The proprietors know their stock with a fanatic's passion and evangelize with a missionary's zeal. We left with 27 colas, and we're glad we did.

CAFETERIA: EDMUND BARR; SODA: KATHLEEN CLARK



SWIMMING POOL

When we need to get wet, we require so much more than water. The Rose Bowl Aquatics Center in Pasadena, with its newly renovated locker room and its two well-maintained pools (a 25-meter and a 50-meter), has long been the standard-bearer for lap swimmers who seek a clean outdoor place to practice their flip turns. But lately our favorite spot is the **Santa Monica Swim Center**, an elegantly designed facility completed two years ago to replace a damaged municipal pool that was more than 50 years old. For serious swimmers, the center's Olympic-size pool offers both short-course (25-meter) and long-course (50-meter) lap swimming. Not far away is a ten-lane instructional "splash" pool, whose shallow depth (four feet maximum) is perfect for teaching youngsters to paddle. The place is sleek, organized (note the signs specifying fast, medium, and slow lanes), and downright beautiful, with blue, black, brick red, and green tiles and a sort of modern deco motif. The only downside—limited public parking nearby—can be easily remedied with the purchase of a Splash Pass ($40 for Santa Monica residents, $80 for nonresidents), which covers 20 swims and includes a permit to park in one of the Santa Monica College lots next door. On weekends, when entrance fees are discounted for families, many people come and stay all day (you're allowed to bring picnics—just no glass bottles), and on summer theme days, usually the third Saturday of the month, there are special activities for children.

LISA ROSNER



SALAD

Choosing wisely from a restaurant menu can be so tedious. We may be peckish but not want anything too heavy. The lobster looks divine but is such a commitment—and no hands free for the cell. The ahi's lovely, too, but didn't we have that yesterday? Beluga, though scrumptious, calls for a good belt of vodka, and our companions may find that unseemly. The folks at Jaan at Raffles L'Ermitage Hotel seem to have felt our pain. They've graciously combined just the right amounts of all our favorites in one elegant bowl. The $45 Salad makes its price point obvious, but its flavors are considerably more subtle, thanks in no small part to the shards of black truffle whose scent will perk up even the most impassive proboscis. At lunch, it's an airy bed of baby and micro greens, with chunks of lobster and noisettes of seared tuna cuddling with baby English peas, tender white asparagus, the teensiest of blini crowned with caviar, and teardrop tomatoes bursting with the flavor of summer. At dinner, the lobster (above) is served in its birthday suit.

MARVELLEN RAKED

FURNITURE RESTORATION

In a nondescript warehouse a few blocks off the 405 freeway and Vermont Avenue, Raoul Brenassay of **Classic Design** will take a rare George Nelson "Coconut" chair, hand-carve new foam to match seamlessly the tapered, bending original, and then cover the concave seat in a chartreuse wool that neither sags nor pillows. Herman Miller entrusts the restoration of vintage Eames chairs to Brenassay, who at 14 was apprenticed in the art of drapery and upholstery in Paris, but the *tapissier* will just as gladly remake the leg of that old table your grandmother passed down to you. Perfection has its price: A hot-glue job on a hockey-inspired Frank Gehry "Cross Check" armchair is $500; an eight-foot custom sofa, $7,500.



CHICKEN: GETTY IMAGES; RESTORATION: LISA ROMEREIN



ROASTED CHICKEN

Koreatown's La Pollo Brasa uses a brick oven and split oak to roast the smokiest, crispiest chicken in town, and Zankou's admirers are legion. But even Zankou's fans speak of the Lebanese chain's garlic sauce in the same breath as the bird, and we think a chicken should fly on its own. **Lola's**, squished into a Van Nuys strip mall, serves a pungent green chile paste for dipping, but that's just gravy alongside the bird's already-flowery marinade, which is redolent of saffron and oregano and maybe Persia, and which is so infused in the moist flesh (we suspect Lola's brines its birds) that each flavorful bite tastes like extravagance. This bird can fly.

19

Clothing Reweaver

At **Toshi's Reweaving**, pieces we gave up for dead come back, if not like new, then pretty darn close. Toshi Ichihara, a Beverly Hills institution, won't reveal the method behind the needles, but her reknitting is remarkable. She's fast, and though some repairs can be pricey, what's a hundred bucks when you're talking about a Chanel suit?

★

20

Vacuum Cleaners

Yes, you could get a vacuum cleaner at Target or Best Buy, but you'd be better served—literally—at **Brentwood Vacuum & Sewing Co.**, where the sales staff has been explaining the airflow and filtration characteristics of Sebo, Riccar, and other serious brands since 1980. And when you suck up your dog's chewy, they'll get your motor going again.

★

21

Soul-Funk Band

The line between music and erotic seduction is irretrievably blurred every time the **Toledo Show** takes the stage. Led by too-cool-by-half poet-singer Toledo and embellished by sultry, fishnet stocking–clad burlesque dancers, this soul/funk/blues/jazz hybrid is libido incarnate. Catch the fever every Sunday night at Harvelle's in Santa Monica.

FOOT MASSAGE

Plenty of spas will offer you a cup of herbal tea. But how many teahouses will massage your feet? We know of just one: **Elixir Tonics & Teas**, a haven of tranquillity where customers can savor the Virtual Buddha and other herb-infused beverages in a Zen rock garden or go a few steps beyond to the recently added Mini-Spa. There, one of a trio of therapists pushes and prods and strokes patrons' tootsies in exactly the right way. Just 20 minutes (for $30) will ensure a happily altered state, and no appointment is necessary—something you won't want to forget the next time you're driving across town in those vertiginous Manolos.



22

Dog-Safety Classes

For more than 20 years Patrick Callaghan has been conducting his **Rattlesnake Avoidance Training Clinic** all over Southern California, teaching dogs (as well as cats, horses, and llamas) how to recognize and keep clear of the irascible reptiles. He uses actual rattlers, either muzzled or defanged, and works with dogs individually to ensure the message gets through.

★

23

Kids' Shoes

The selection at **For Kids Only** is deep and discounted. The floor can be a scene, with grandmas lobbying for patent lace-ups while kids read the store copy of *The Big Red Barn*, but the staff knows the stock well and keeps matters moving fast.

★

24

Comic Books

Hunger for *Astroboy*, *Gigantor*, or hard-to-find Japanese titles? How about some Russian stop-motion animation, a Hong Kong art toy, or Tintin merchandise? Get thee to **Meltdown**. Gaston Dominguez Letelier, the store's co-owner and secret weapon, has impeccable taste. He's also helped cultivate a friendly atmosphere that accomplishes the impossible for a comics store: It lures women customers.



KARAOKE

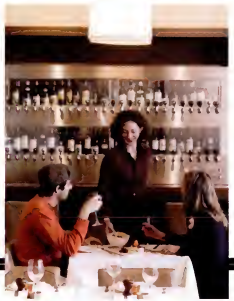
We have fond memories of crooning "Porcupine Pie" on Saturday nights at the Farmers Market, but a recent management switch pulled the plug. Thank goodness, then, for **Brass Monkey**. The Koreatown watering hole is so crowded, there's no room for inhibition. Low, wood-beamed ceilings evoke a cozy cabin, albeit one filled with a messy amalgam of humanity, from brides-to-be to businessmen to Axl Rose wannabes shamelessly singing their guts out on the barroom floor. The singing begins most nights at 9, and the list fills up fast. So do the tables; by 10 it's standing room only. For a tad less madness—and feverish youth—we prefer going on weeknights. Jack Black does, too.



CHURCH CHOIR

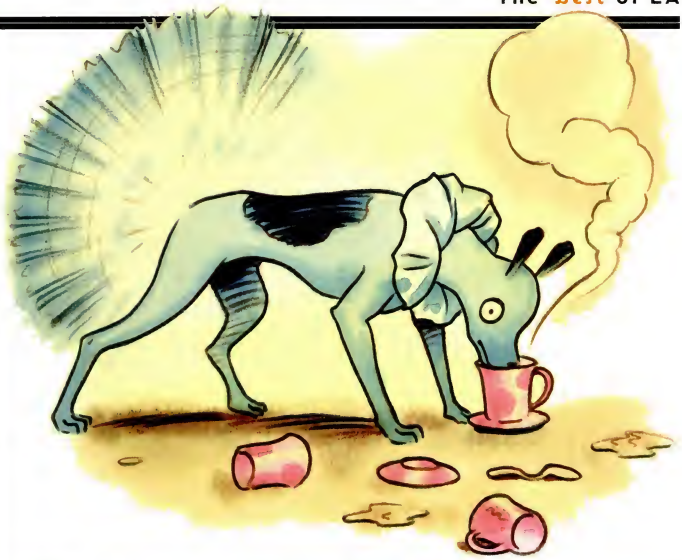
Sampling the city's array of choirs, we sat through enough church services to keep our souls clean until 2025. The sounds emanating from the singers at West Angeles Cathedral Church of God in Christ can inspire the most spiritually bereft, and the Gregorian chant service at Saint Victor's in West Hollywood is serenity itself. But the choir at **Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral** embodies the perfect marriage of song and setting: The beatific music raining down from the choir loft blends mellifluously with the cathedral's gold-leaf opulence. Draped in Concord grape–colored robes, the 20 or so stewards hum, chant, and sing in multileveled bilingual (Greek and English) harmonies that we feel smack-dab in our chest each time we hear them.

FIRST-DATE RESTAURANT



Let's set the parameters. We're assuming this isn't an Internet flyby but a genuine first date—you know each other, you've got friends in common, he's your brother's college roommate. That sort of thing. The restaurant of choice is a no-brainer: **A.O.C.** Why? Because it's always buzzing, so awkward silences are unlikely. And because you have to confer over the small-plates menu, which means easy conversation as well as insights into your potentially significant other: Is she vegetable-phobic or lactose-intolerant? Is he inhibited about sharing or incapable of asking for help with the idiosyncratic wine list? There's a bulletproof aspect to the choice, too. No matter what you think of your date, chef Suzanne Goin is bound to deliver a good meal.

KARAOKE: GETTY IMAGES; CHOIR: KATHLEEN CLARK; RESTAURANT: ELON SCHOENHOLZ



ESPRESSO

Starbucks conflates charcoal with complexity, and while Peet's, the best of the chains, compensates for the overly dark roast of its beans with care in preparation, we still long for the sort of gracefully balanced espresso that's ubiquitous in Paris and Rome and Seattle. Because what most caffeine-and-laptop joints sell is nothing more than a thimble of dirty water. There are some exceptions, of course: When we're in Eagle Rock, we always have confidence ordering a shot at Swork, where they use beans roasted by Chicago's estimable Intelligentsia Coffee. West Hollywood's Urth Caffé makes two admirable espressos, regular and *dolce*, with organic beans. But the revelation in our hunt for the ideal espresso was **Sabor y Cultura**. Formerly called Espresso Mi Cultura, the artsy, activist-minded café on Hollywood Boulevard boasts rich, chocolaty espresso that's smooth rather than bitter and capped with a layer of thick, dark, gleaming *crema* that escorts and protects delicate aroma notes. It's a product of painstaking precision in grinding, compacting, and measuring. Owner Ramon Pantoja even adjusts the fineness of the grounds according to the humidity levels outside. "Espresso is so rarely done right in America," he says, "which is why we treat it like people do in other countries—like the gourmet drink that it is." The free wireless Internet access, monthly art exhibits, and regular evening entertainment wouldn't be the same without a demitasse of Pantoja's espresso.

ORCHIDS



Orchids, those dewy divas, occupy a special niche somewhere between pets and furniture. Once in bud, they'll flower flawlessly for weeks, even in a dark room. It's trying to get them in bud again that turns them temperamental. Before you shop, then, it helps to understand whether you want something to nurture or just admire. For non-gardeners who dream of tropical terraces, Orchids de Oro will not only design one and install unusual Malaysian varieties and a stone lion, but maintain the planting as well. Their showroom is a Culver City Eden. Prices, however, run high. Serious collectors will appreciate Danziger's Orchids. Ned Danziger, who operates a booth at the Hollywood Farmers Market, has been breeding and showing orchids for 45 years, and his four Northridge greenhouses contain wonders, some of which he considers too rare to sell. **Orchid Fever** suits buyers of all persuasions, and that's why we like it most of all. A waterfall mists the entryway. Beyond are separate rooms devoted to warm- and cool-temperature orchids, nearly all California grown: the mothlike *Phalaenopsis*; the midnight purple lady's slipper; a grass-leaved oddity with flowers the color of Angelyne's lips. More keep arriving in the shop's climate-controlled vans. The selection here is vast and healthy, you get more flower spikes per dollar than at Trader Joe's, and the instruction sheets are so clear they make nurturing seem easy.

OUTDOOR BAR

If we're going to drink outside in L.A., we want to experience L.A., which is exactly what the rooftop bar at the **Downtown Standard** lets us do. At sunset, from the rooftop's edges, we can't spot a single landmark informing us that we're in L.A. Yet this could be no other place. With plastic cup in hand, we float 13 stories up, surrounded by the reflecting skin of 50-story buildings and a happy-hour crowd of MBAs, paralegals, Hollywood club kids, Eastside slackers, high-power attorneys, bike messengers, and city hall flacks. It's a panorama quickly working its way to landmark status.



TAXIDERMIST



When Fido passes on to that dog park in the sky, you can cremate him or bury him—or you can take his body to **Bischoff's Taxidermy** for a more lasting tribute. Founded in 1922, this Burbank institution can handle just about any pet, from mice and hamsters ($375) to larger animals (they did Roy Rogers's Trigger in 1965), as well as mount that ten-pound bucketmouth from Lake Okeechobee. Cats and dogs cost from $1,000 to $3,400, depending on size and condition (the on-site taxidermists recommend freezing immediately for best results). Come in for an estimate or just to gawk. Bischoff's does prop work for the nearby movie studios—*Seabiscuit* was a recent project—and has a showroom that features 400 stuffed animals, including crocs, baboons, and bighorn sheep in various states of repose.

MAGIC SUPPLIES

It's nice to know that if we are ever in the market for a $750 guillotine, Louis St. Pierre Jr. has one in stock. St. Pierre's shop, **Hollywood Magic**, has all the gadgets and gewgaws that prestidigitators yearn for: capes, wands, escape handcuffs, vanishing bottles, linking rings, and floating roses, as well as books and videos with titles like *Encyclopedia of Cigarette Tricks* and *Learn to Levitate*. Such top tricksters as David Copperfield, Ricky Jay, and David Blaine stop by the 57-year-old business, and because the guys who work here are also magicians, they often treat visitors to a little sleight of hand. Just don't ask, "How'd you do that?" To get in on the secret, you have to buy the trick.



33

Easy Hike

The three-mile leg of the old Mount Wilson Toll Road from Altadena to the tranquil Henninger Flats campgrounds involves a healthy climb (with a vertical gain of 1,500 feet), but the trail is wide and smooth. Start early, bring some water (you can refill at any of the three campgrounds), and enjoy the sweeping views of the San Gabriel Valley.

★

34

Pianos

David L. Abell Fine Pianos carries a range of distinguished instruments, from the classic Yamaha upright to a Bösendorfer grand that costs as much as three Hummers. The ivy-covered store was bought by Keyboard Concepts in 1999, but the staff has maintained Abell's commitment to quality and knowledgeable service.

★

35

Candle Selection

Whether we're looking for a $12 Red Flower votive the size of a Nyquil cap or a 27-inch lavender Cerunavolta for $350, the Malibu Colony Co. is bound to stock it. The eclectic shop is stacked high with soy candles that neither smoke nor soot, every scent from spearmint to vanille-jasmine-tabac, and all the big wicks in the world of wax.

TAXIDERMIST: GETTY IMAGES; BAR: STEPHEN AUSTIN WEECH

36

Baby Store

There's a global village inside Kid's Land U.S.A. Along with bedroom furniture and toys, the independent retailer features shoe and clothing departments seemingly airlifted from Paris and Milan; phalanxes of Italian, British, and Japanese-designed strollers; and a full inventory of newborn accoutrements, from automated breast pumps to Swedish-made bouncy seats.

★

37

L.A. Summer Novel

Fleur de Leigh's Life of Crime and Fleur de Leigh in Exile by Diane Leslie bring back dreamy, ditzy 1950s Hollywood—redolent of grapefruit and Chanel No. 5. As teenage Fleur learns about life in her parents' Beverly Hills mansion (yes, Mom is seducing Nanny's boyfriend) and at a dysfunctional boarding school, she draws conclusions that are a sly mix of Doris Day and Jackie Collins.

★

38

Parking Garage

About the only place you can find free parking these days is on a Monopoly board. That's why we like the Westside Pavilion's open-access garage—no tickets, no booths, no bother. The layout is eccentric, but it's so small, you can't possibly forget where you left your car.

ITALIAN RESTAURANT

The Italian restaurant requires more than Italian food. Around the maypole of pastas and risottos fly the ribbons of camaraderie and occasion, welcome and delight. From neighborhood spots such as Angeli Caffe and Il Grano to landmark destinations such as Valentino and Vincenti, an abundance of places achieve the right mix. **Angelini Osteria**, however, defines it. Gino Angelini's cooking has an understated brilliance and a discreet generosity that draw on his native Rimini to soulful effect. The clamor in the dining room captures an atmosphere that is indelibly Italian. Wine flows, guanciale is savored, and conversation seems to never flag. The 7300 block of Beverly Boulevard rocks with a sense of pure abandon twice every day.



RESTAURANT: SNEAKERS: MARY ELLEN BAKER

GO-CART TRACK

At Carson's **Go Kart World**, driving for fun is not an L.A. oxymoron. Built in the shadow of the 405 freeway, the mini speed zone boasts six tracks of varying shape, size, and intensity, providing the most callow youths a chance to exercise their inner driving demons (cell phone not included). You have to be at least three to ride the electric buggies, but even grown-ups zip around in the gas-fueled carts. Our favorite? The Super Track, which sports polished, double-decker lanes that send the abbreviated "NASCAR" carts sliding around the banked turns. Topping out at 28 mph, it may be the fastest we'll ever go along this stretch of the freeway.





HIP SNEAKERS

"I'm a sneakerhead," says Ygal Aiche. "I grew up in Paris, and I was collecting shoes there since I was 13." Today Aiche co-owns **Kicks: Sole Provider**, a commercial shrine to the sneaker. The Larchmont emporium certainly carries athletic shoes that people use for, say, athletics, but most of the space is devoted to the sneaker-as-fashion-accessory. Retro Asics, Nike Dunks from Europe, and New Balance from Japan fill the shelves. The shop customizes, too, painting on flowers or swirls or anything else a customer thinks up. Those with a serious sneaker jones will want to gaze at the collection of Air Jordans (in several styles) and other Nike dead stock. Appropriately enough, it's encased in glass.

CHOCOLATES



L.A. has a hefty showing in the homegrown gourmet chocolates category. Bodega has a swell selection and is conveniently placed in the Grove, Intemperantia in the Palisades has a following, and See's is a staple rather than an indulgence for those of us who are carefree—or uncontrollable—when it comes to sugar and cholesterol. (For more responsible imbibers, Comparte's in Brentwood makes a tasty low-cholesterol assortment of chocolates.) But our favorite box of chocolates comes from a relative newcomer. Kristy Choo, an award-winning pastry chef from Singapore, opened the Asian-inspired **Jin Patisserie** last fall in Venice, and alongside her coffees, fine teas, and sophisticated sweets she sells an assortment of chocolates unlike any others we've tried. Made by hand in the back of the small shop (visitors sit in the garden), the diminutive square confections, covered in dark and milk chocolate, are filled with creamy ganache that has been delicately flavored with the likes of jasmine, lotus, ginger, mango, and kalamansi (an Asian lime): lemongrass, litchi, roasted black sesame, and passion fruit. Choo's shop was one of the first in the United States to sell the fancy Le Palais des Thé line and now uses essences of its teas in her chocolates as well. Handpick your selection and have it packed in a box, which can also be fashioned from chocolate.

MARVIN NASSO



FRAMER

Ask local artists where the best place to have a painting framed is, and they'll usually say OTA House or Don Francis, venerable establishments with strong ties to the city's troika of powerhouse museums: LACMA, MOCA, and the Getty. True, David Hockney put his imprimatur on Francis by designing the framer's logo, and OTA House's touch is crisp and precise. But ask the same artists—Ed Ruscha among them—where they take *their* canvases, and they'll whisper **Fourth Corner Conservation Framing** (discretion is an art-world obsession—never give away trade secrets). No frame samples hang on the walls; no mattes are displayed. A few large, carpeted tables are the only furniture Todd Squires has put in his spartan shop since opening last October. The framed work is equally understated. Maple, walnut, poplar, and pine are the principal woods, shaped into plain rectangles and stained in naturalistic hues. Still less noticeable though more important: the moisture-free adhesives, the acid-free paper, the specially made "hinges" that hold a work away from all surfaces. The results are subtle. Pieces appear to float. "I love that people will be looking at my frame," says Squires, the son of a lithographer, "but I want them to look at the artwork even more."

LISA ROMEREIN



STRING QUARTET

"People expect the unexpected from us," says Steve Scharf, second violinist of the **Armadillo String Quartet**. Indeed, the ensemble is known as much for its nonclassical approach to classical music as for its vibrant musicianship. Scharf, along with first violinist Barry Socher (also a first violinist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic), violist Raymond Tischer, and cellist Roger Lebow (since succeeded by Armen Ksajikian), formed the group in 1980. A favorite of serious/satirical composer Peter Schickele, the Armadillos premiered a quartet by his alter ego, P.D.Q. Bach, at Carnegie Hall in 1999. More recently, they won acclaim with a spring Colburn School tribute to Charles Ives, but the foursome's not beyond dressing up as Mount Rushmore—or as women—for Halloween performances.

CUPCAKES

The cupcake is humble no more. Forget the rubbery confections with helmets of hard icing that came out of Easy-Bake Ovens or, swaddled in wax paper, from your *Jetsons* lunch box. Generations ahead of itself in the food-for-one category, this token of homespun Americana has come of age, and nobody knows it better than the kitchen at **Joan's on Third**. They've elevated its ingredients and have the good sense to do so without making it persnickety. Joan's chocolate cupcake is a vastly improved riff on the Hostess model—supermoist, iced with a fudgy ganache embellished with a white curlicue *J* (nice touch)—and has a burst of marshmallow cream filling. A vanilla version is coated with fresh coconut flakes. Mini cupcakes are available, too—ideal for that shower or tea.



GOLF SECRET

In the time it takes our brethren to work through the queue at Rancho Park, we're already on the fourth hole at the par 3 **Veterans Administration Golf Course** in Brentwood. The short, hilly nine-hole is an unpolished jewel with small greens, phenomenal views of the Getty Center, and no crowds. Beginners can slice to their heart's content without the sort of pressure they'd experience at the city's heavily trafficked courses. Not only have the links lingered in obscurity since opening to the public seven years ago, but they offer unlimited play. For eight bucks—collected in the Quonset hut that doubles as the starter's shack—we can play as many rounds as we want.



47

Kennel

The **Kennel Club LAX** gets our vote. It caters to cats, dogs, and exotics with everything from basic accommodations to themed cottages with TVs and VCRs. The VIP suite comes with a 24-hour human companion, and options include bonus playtimes, swimming, and massage. The clincher? It's just a few minutes from the airport.

★

48

Telescope Store

With the Griffith Observatory closed until 2006, you'll need your own glass to see Ptolemy's Cluster or Jupiter's Great Red Spot. **Scope City** has telescopes for every budget and level of interest, from computerized Schmidt-Cassegrains to no-frills Newtonians. Better yet, just pick out a good pair of binoculars and a star map (the astronomical kind).

★

49

Vegan Restaurant

With taco cheese cobbled together from rain forest cashews and sunflower seeds, peppered seitan standing in for Philly cheese steak, and blackened tempeh passing passably for a Reuben's corned beef, **Native Foods** in Westwood transports vegans back to their blessed if benighted carnivorous past.

QUARTET: COMSTOCK; CUPCAKES: MARY LILEN BAKER

50

Scrapbooking Supplies

The enormous selection of paper, embellishments, stickers, and stamps at Scrampers can jazz up the most mundane family photos, and there are evening classes to help novitiates tell a die-cut machine from a bone folder. Scrampers has so much stuff—including a small play area for kids—that the shop is expanding next door.

★

51

Radio Sports-Talk Host

For the sheepishly sports obsessed—those of us who can use "Mendoza Line" in a sentence yet know our brain cells could be put to better use—the guru is Tony Bruno, whose R-rated morning show on XTRA Sports (690 AM/1150 AM) is all "high jinks and tomfoolery." There are bigger names and louder mouths but nobody as literate or absurd.

★

52

Rocking Chairs

The L.A. Rocking Chair Store might be bare bones and owner Robert Loscalzo's jokes—"I'm off my rocker!"—creaky, but this is the place for seating that moves, from handsome solid oak Kennedy rockers to Dutailier gliders, a favorite of new moms. Because moms can't be new forever, Loscalzo stocks children's models, too.



BLOW OUT

Those of us with curly hair know that a good blow out is hard to find. Some barely make the drive home without developing a case of the frizzies; others leave our hair so stiff, we can't wait to rinse it out. Then we went under the dryer with **Natalia Bruschi** at Fred Segal Beauty, and our skepticism disappeared. After she's finished with them, those curls stay stick straight for a week. Bruschi's good company—she's warm and quick (30 to 40 minutes even for long, thick tresses) and listens to idiosyncratic requests. She's got secrets, too: Use a tiny round brush for the hairline, a touch of the flatiron midshaft only, and minimal products. Our hair feels just washed when we walk out the door.



KNITTING SUPPLIES

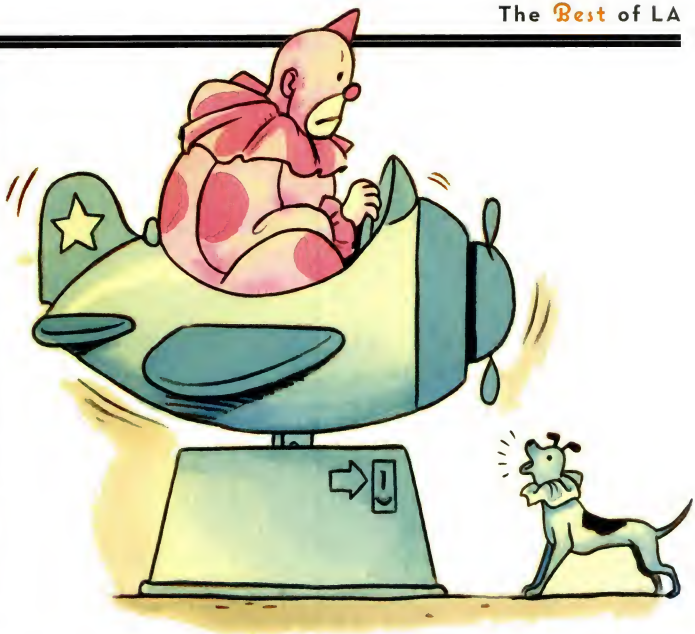
Suzan Mischer's **Knit Cafe** may not offer as much yarn as some other stores, but in this case, less is more. The space is airy and homey, not at all overwhelming. Mischer's got a following of adoring customers, many you'd recognize, who gather round the central table and in cushy chairs for stitch-and-bitch sessions while nibbling on complimentary cake. Mischer, a former CBS executive, also holds classes (one for kids was recently added to the roster), but what really gets our needles clicking are the custom patterns she gives away. We answer a litany of questions about what we're aiming for: A sweater. Tight around the waist. With long sleeves. And a crew neck. Within 24 hours—sometimes within minutes—a computer spits out a blueprint for success.

GELATERIA



Gelato was created with sultry climes like ours in mind, but some establishments that sell the Italian ice cream seem to have little of anything in mind beyond Foster's Freeze. In a blind taste test we sampled spoonfuls of vanilla from the city's most prominent gelaterias. Our favorite? The **Gelato Caffe** in West Hills. Smooth and soft and intense—but not too—owner Eli Golan's vanilla had an almost roasted finish where others were cloying or coconutty or left a sour aftertaste. It's authentic enough for a hot date in Piazza Santa Maria but works just as well for the kids from nearby El Camino Real. The recipe's a secret, something Golan picked up in Italy. But don't stop at vanilla. They make 36 flavors on the premises each day.

BLOW OUT: COMSTOCK. KNITTING: LISA WYATT. GELATERIA: MINDEE CHOI



WAY TO FLY

We're sure that having a pilot's license is grand, but getting one seems so, well, *involved*—the trips to the airport, the exams, and all those hours spent sealed in the sort of wobbly craft that's always slamming into neighborhoods. With **Air Combat U.S.A.**, we sat through a 60-minute lecture before we were at the controls of a spunky German stunt plane, dogfighting 4,000 feet above the Pacific. Wearing a flight suit and playing pilot may sound ripe for World War II reenactors, but it's so much more than that. Guys who've flown for the military sit at the rear of both cockpits, guiding the planes until we're at a level altitude and buzzing toward the coastline. "You can take over now," our guide says, and we do, sending the wings tilting left, then right, then left again as we try to adjust to the joystick. Soon the bright sky that suffused our Plexiglas canopy vanishes; the tip of the plane barrels toward the dim patchwork of Palos Verdes Peninsula before we come out of the loop, firing our laser madly at the construction contractor in the other plane. A cord of smoke unspools from his fuselage, and it's all caught on three video cameras. By the time we touch down at Fullerton Municipal Airport we are soaked with sweat and feeling altogether top gun. Mission accomplished, indeed.



SUMMER HATS

Sunblock may be noble, but when the occasion calls for a little Sophia Loren charm, no amount of SPF can compare to the shady charisma of a bonnet. With its overstocked hallway of floppy linen caps and canvas bucket styles, Fred Segal Hats in Santa Monica is a dependable source of happening chapeaus, but for the most comprehensive collection Los Angeles has to offer, **Hollywood Hatters** gets our vote. Sal Rovero opened the unpretentious shop along Melrose two years ago. "I first started selling to the Sunday-church and Saturday-synagogue crowd because there was a need for fancy dress hats," Rovero says. Since then he's provided head coverage for the tours of Christina Aguilera, Janet Jackson, and Madonna, as well as for Steven Spielberg's latest movie, *The Terminal*. The room is filled with teetering columns of hats to suit just about every occasion—stingy-brimmed fedoras, straw panamas, cotton newsboys, motorcycle caps, classic porkpies. "Some hats are always in fashion, and other styles come and go," he says, "but we'll carry them all." In the off chance it's not in stock, Rovero will special-order.

MINDEE CHOI

LATE-NIGHT MENU



It's after midnight; we're out and feeling hungry. Yes, we can have the rolled tacos at Benito's or a bowl of miso soup at the Downtown Standard, but sometimes at that hour we need more than mere sustenance. That's when the best choice is **The Kitchen**, a modest place on Sunset and Fountain where the interior is gutted-chic and the menu is quirky. The goat cheese latkes with applesauce are improbable; the meat loaf represents security itself. A sense of companionship envelops a group of friends passing around beef stew made with dark Belgian-style beer. But it's the restaurant's large windows that add the nocturnal touch. Outside a limousine and a U-Haul nose down Sunset; inside the busboy tops off our cup.



PET BIRDS

If there's such a thing as a bird boutique, **Omar's Exotic Birds** in West Hollywood is it. The store's immaculate interior showcases a menagerie of colorful divas, which preen in the open air on circular perches designed by proprietor Omar Gonzalez. The birds seem content, and they come with their hatch date, a money-back health guarantee, and free grooming for life. There's a wall of toys that's absurdly large, and the bins of birdseed and treats—Omar's own recipes—look like they were trucked in from Whole Foods. The store also provides a boarding service, Camp Omar, where homesick birds can listen to jungle sounds and watch cartoons.

JEWELRY REPAIR

Whether Grandma's emerald and diamond ring needs new prongs or the clasp on that everyday necklace has snapped, we entrust our jewelry to **Altobelli Jewelers**. Third-generation jeweler Cosmo Altobelli started his apprenticeship at age six, and he opened the shop with his parents in 1948. His three jewelers have a combined six decades of experience and perform repairs with everything from mini torches to laser solders to their bare hands. "Anything we do, you wouldn't be able to tell that something has been done," Altobelli says. If they don't have the right tool, he adds, they'll make it.



61

Offbeat Guide to L.A.

Nothing rivals the Southern California edition of Tours for Free California when it comes to good, miserly fun. Attractions range from the familiar (the Getty) to the offbeat (the Chapalita Tortilleria) to the obscure (the Drum Barracks Civil War Museum, home to 19th-century guns and gadgets), with lots of wonderful trivia sandwiched in between.

★

62

Costumes

When we have a hankering to dress like a giant corncob, Hollywood Toys & Costumes is the place we go. Phony eyebrow rings, prosthetic scars, mullet wigs—the floor is filled with getups and accoutrements for masqueraders big, small, clever, and crass. The shop's wares are good enough to pass muster with the movie studios and local theater groups that use them.

★

63

Pedicure

Genis Gregorian, at the Four Seasons spa in Beverly Hills, counts politicos, royalty, and humbler soles among her clients, many of whom forgo color for a clear polish or buff—that's how impressive her clipper, file, and pumice work is. Sit in a luxe reclining chair in a sunny room at the spa or get the treatment in a poolside cabana.

MENU: RACHEL WELL. BIRDS: GETTY IMAGES

64

Park

Santa Monica's Douglas Park is that rarity in these parts: a public green that offers something for every age group. Tots can wrestle gravity in the creatively equipped playground while boomers volley in the pair of tennis courts and their parents lawn bowl. A large cement oval—beloved by budding skaters and cyclists—features hand-activated fountains for cooling off, and a stream sluices into a water garden where people can practice casting flies.

★

65

Cookware

We haven't found anyone more devoted to combing the earth for the ultimate in kitchen gear than Jing Tio, owner of Le Sanctuaire. His small space is filled with the cream of the crop: French copper pots, Cristofle glasses, linen chef's wear, and the finest olive oils, rices, and pastas.

★

66

Indoor Rock Climbing

Forget meditation. When we *really* want to quiet our minds, we head for Rockreation, the indoor climbing gym where your search for the next toehold requires a focus that most mantras can't summon. With 10,000 square feet of sculpted climbing terrain, this place offers 23-foot ascents, gravity-defying bouldering routes, and great traversing. Personal instruction, classes, and kids' activities are available.

SKI EQUIPMENT

Sure, **Ski Net Sports** sells high-end technical skis and accessories, but it's the feet that owner Claude Swonger is fanatical about. He knows that great equipment isn't worth a damn if your boots don't fit right. Swonger has been making ski boot orthotics for 25 years and is so particular, his employees can't do a fitting themselves until they complete a two-year apprenticeship with him. He closely surveys the foot and the range of motion in the ankle and then, after a boot's been selected, creates a cast of the foot for the orthotic. "Nobody has a foot exactly like yours, so every boot fit should be a custom boot fit," says Swonger, who counts former world champion freestyle skier Bob Salerno among his clients.



LINGERIE

Large? Small? Demure? Wild? **Under G's** has got it covered, but just barely. The lingerie shop caters to all types with a full complement of intimate apparel from Europe's most desirable labels. La Perla lace bodysuits, Aubade silk panties with drawstring closures, Nina Ricci mesh bras, and paper-thin cotton tank tops from Hanro are natural choices for comfortable yet sexy underpinnings. For extra support, there's La Perla's more modest (and moderately priced) line, Occhi Verdi, with bras in bubble gum pink, black, and white. They've got the whole Cosabella collection, too—thongs, panties, camisoles, and night dresses. Meow.





ANTIQUE WATCHES

In a digital world, **Hooshmand Antique Watches** remains refreshingly windup. Hooshmand Talasazan moved his business from Tehran to the Antiquarius mall in West Hollywood six years ago, and the new store—now owned by his daughter, Nelly—is stocked with much of the exquisite inventory he accumulated while catering to a timepiece-obsessed Iranian clientele over the two previous decades: 50-year-old unused Elgins with their gold foil tags still hanging from them, Invictas and junior Pierce chronographs and Telors asserting themselves among the Rolexes and Omegas. Hooshmand will obligingly pop off the backs of his watches, so that together you can marvel at the springs, wheels, and screws that make them tick.

SKI EQUIPMENT: LISA ROWENTHAL; WATCHES: COMSTOCK





Brunch is rarely about closing a deal, opening an account, or leveraging a buyout. Most often, it's a lush celebration of laziness with no agenda whatsoever on the table. That means the food, the setting, and the service are paramount. In our search for the ultimate experience we considered the menu, the atmosphere, the horseradish quotient of the Bloody Marys, and the sprightliness of the mimosas. We were strict. Even so, this was a category with close runners-up. Saddle Peak Lodge in Calabasas has its stone patio and soufflé pancakes, Mix in West Hollywood has that wraparound porch and elegant prix fixe menu, and any alfresco meal at the Hotel Bel-Air feels like a tryst. But after much consideration and consumption, we give the winning nod to **Jar**. Suzanne Tracht's menu has scope without bloat: freshly baked sticky buns; lobster Benedict with poached eggs, *char sui* pork, pea tendrils, and lobster hollandaise; pot roast hash with two eggs, potatoes, and coffee gravy; as well as *chilaquiles* named for Tracht's line cook, Eddy. There are pancakes, too, of course, along with French toast, granola, an omelette, and smoked salmon. The juice is fresh, the cocktails correct, and *The New York Times* and *The National Enquirer* are hanging at the bar. Thanks to the new owner, *Everybody Loves Raymond* producer Phil Rosenthal, a victim of insufficient self-padding, there are also comfy chairs that will make you want to stay on until dunch.

BRUNCH

RACHEL WILL



BIKES

With its buying power, SuperGo in Santa Monica is the place to get a good deal on a two-wheeler. We've fared well at Helen's Cycles, too, which got its start 68 years ago in Santa Monica before growing into a six-store chain. Then we went to **Bicycle John's Serious Cycling** and realized what we've been missing. John Fries's Burbank shop is small, and it's tough finding anything cheaper than $750; most bikes are at least three times that. But rather than loading up on mass-produced bikes by Specialized and Trek as everybody else does, Fries concentrates on revered brands—Moots, Pinarello, Seven, Look—and tailors them to each customer. "We build from the frame up," says Fries. "We go through the whole selection with the customer and talk about their style of riding." Fitting sessions can be intense, and although the mechanics can get backed up with repairs, they're also considered unrivaled in the dying art of wheel rebuilding. Deciding between carbon fiber and titanium? Most shops will let you do a lap around the block to test a bike; Fries may point a customer to nearby Griffith Park to log 10 or 15 miles. "I try to make sure you understand what it is you're buying," he says. "I want customers to *feel* the bike underneath them." The paradox is that amid such solemnity we never detect even a hint of the snobbery that's flung around at other stores.

LISA BOMERSTEIN



RECORD STORE

They've just added a goth section at **Amoeba Music**, giving the best record store in Southern California a brand-new kohl-eyed pout. That's the only gloomy note in an otherwise eerily friendly place, where the clerks never try to make you feel stupid for wanting that England Dan & John Ford Coley greatest hits album. Half the staff are DJs, the other half musicians, and all are able to supply a smirk-free answer. In its three years Amoeba has become the indisputable kingpin in town, and it's growing in ways bigger than the goth section: The free live shows—the Eagles of Death Metal, Los Lobos, and Devendra Banhart all recently—just keep getting better. If this blob expands any further, it'll have to take over the Cinerama Dome next door.



ART SUPPLIES

Pens, paints, papers, and equipment are tucked into every cranny of **World Supply**, a mainstay for artists, architects, and animators since 1970. An extensive book selection transcends the expected Walter Foster how-to guides, and the staff go beyond the pale. Need to replace that discontinued sketching pen? They won't just track one down for you; they'll stock it as well. The incongruous assortment of jazz CDs isn't bad, either.

CAIPIRINHA



Made of muddled lime and sugar, crushed ice, and drenched with a sugarcane brandy called *cachaca*, the *caipirinha* is the Brazilian cousin of the *mojito*. It's labor intensive to make and potent to drink—Henry Ford reportedly tried to outlaw cachaca at his Brazilian rubber outposts because he thought his workers were losing focus. Caipirinha-savvy bars are a small subset in L.A., and some interpretations are laughably broad, so stick with the professionals. The Ritz-Carlton in the Marina serves a fine version. Our top prize, however, goes to **Ciudad**, where bartender Victor muddles and mixes with the fluidity of a magician and gets the proportion of ice and cachaca just right. Word to the wise: Go heavy on the tip. It takes five minutes and hardy biceps to make one drink.

75

Archery Lessons

Every Saturday morning from 9 to 11, the dusty hollows of the Arroyo Seco become Sherwood Forest as the **Pasadena Roving Archers** teach beginners how to stand, draw, aim, release, and retrieve. Instruction is free, but get there by 8:15, because equipment is limited.

*

76

Bath and Body Shop

Just looking at the colorful shelves of **Palmetto** makes us want to go home and get naked. Whether we yearn for $12 all-natural French milled soap or $75 luxurious bath oil, we know we can find it here. The shop carries soap and body wash in every fragrance imaginable and for every member of the family, including the dog.

*

77

Swimsuits

Turtle Beach Swimwear takes the anxiety out of swimsuit shopping. Racks of itsy-bitsy bikinis and full-coverage one-pieces hang at the ready, but custom work is welcome, too. Brazilian bottoms, one-pieces with asymmetric cutouts, crocheted bikinis—name a style, pick a fabric (or bring your own), and get measured. In fact, if you have a favorite suit that has seen better days, you can bring it in for them to reproduce.

RECORDS: COMSTOCK; CAIPIRINHA: MARYELLEN BAKER

78

Fireplace Fixtures

Eighty-three years in the business of selling log pokers, Paykel Fireplace Fixtures is comfortably crammed with Arts and Crafts screens, enamel-plated wood-burning stoves, stitched leather log holders, and the latest in "realistic flame technology." And like a lot of 83-year-olds, they have heaps of useful advice to offer.

★

79

Museum Gift Shop

Frustrated gift givers need look no further than the Japanese American National Museum Store. Handmade tea bowls by celebrated ceramists share shelf space with daikon sprout seed packets, *Teach Me Japanese* CDs, sushi-shaped candles, green tea bubble bath, and sumo lunch boxes. A broad selection of books rounds out the mix.

★

80

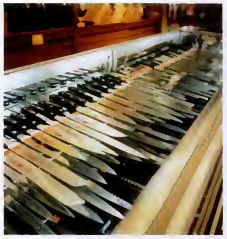
Yoga Clothes

Yoga is all about balance. Why not radiate that new inner light with reflective togs? Sacred Movement Yoga's boutique has a smart selection of Om Girl, Hard Tail, Shiva Shakti, Velvet, and other swell lines that range from hippie chic to subdued sophistication. There are plenty of cool and roomy togs for guys as well.



LOCAL BEAUTY LINE

There's an impressive crop of commercial bath and body products being mixed up in kitchens throughout the city. So we've sniffed, slathered, and bathed ourselves silly to find the all-around best performer. Kai has an intoxicating gardenia scent, and Bath Petals looks gorgeous, but we go wild for **Nyakio**. Using her Kenyan family recipes, Nyakio Kamoche blends natural ingredients and essential oils to come up with products like Citrus Moluccana Body Wash, Grapefruit Tarragon Body Crème, and—our favorite—Kenyan Coffee and Sugar Scrub, which left our skin impossibly soft. She got her start stirring batches in her downtown loft before the line was picked up by stores nationwide. Now Nyakio—it means "hardworking woman in the sunshine"—is introducing a perfume. We can't wait.



KNIVES

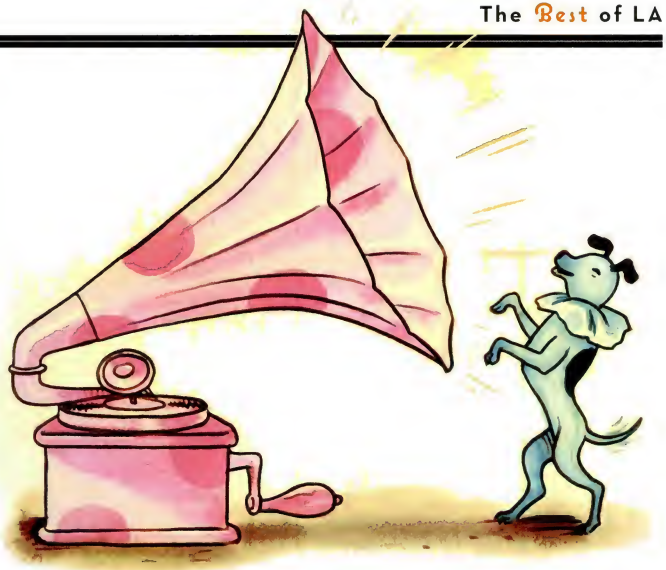
Nobody has been on L.A.'s cutting edge longer than Allen and Richard Wattenberg. Their shop, **Ross Cutlery & Sharpening Service**, has been downtown in the landmark Bradbury Building for 87 years, and Wattenbergs have owned and operated the place since 1964. Cooks relish the selection from renowned makers like J.A. Henckels and F. Dick; handy outdoor types spend hours perusing the cabinets filled with thousands of penknives, pocketknives, buck knives, Swiss Army knives, and little key chain jobbies that cut through anything but weigh nothing. Most dramatic, however, are the collectibles: swords, daggers, and wicked-looking ceremonial knives that only a Klingon would know how to use.



MALT

The malt is a moribund art form. At most places it's just a tablespoon of Carnation powder hastily mixed with milk, soft-serve ice cream, and the artificial flavor of your choice. It's a bad sign, for example, when a "chocolate" malt has a telltale line of chocolate syrup draped over the edge of the glass. The malt at Swingers has an in-your-face charm (a little like the waitresses) that does the genre proud, but the quintessence of maltitude can be found at only one place in L.A. County: **Fosselman's Ice Cream Co.**, where more than 50 flavors of handmade ice cream (including chai tea) make any malt a lumpy paradise, a creamy rapture that never gets too rich down the homestretch.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KATHLEEN CLARK; MARYELLEN BAKER; MINDEE CHO



DANCING

Parents may be donning cargo shorts, and kids may be ripping their forebears' CDs, but on the dance floor, there's still a gaping chasm between the generations. Nobody weaned on Slim Shady is going to move in quite the same way as someone who's survived the original onslaughts of prog, punk, disco, and new wave. Clubbers as young as 18 get more for their buck at **Bang!**, which takes over the Ruby on Saturdays. Local legends Jason Lavitt and Joseph Brooks spin indie stuff like the Yeah Yeah Yeahs in one room; Chris B, who specializes in '60s mod and northern soul, reigns over another; in the back room Ali plays a funky mix of mash-ups and hip-hop. Generation X's top spot is **Club Screwball**, held Tuesday nights at the Parlour Club. The gorgeously cross-dressed DJ Prickle wields a wacky but highly danceable blend of vintage garage, Turkish hard rock, no-wave, '60s psychedelia, and Bollywood hits. Punk rock veterans like ex-Germs drummer Don Bolles sometimes guest on the turntables, esoteric videos flicker on the walls, and live performances range from cabaret chanteuses to underground bands to burlesque. For those of us more chronologically endowed, **King King** is the place to bust a move. The musicians' hangout draws a cool but unpretentious crowd with its live music. The house band, Sono-Lux, cooks up Afro-Cuban jazz that seriously sizzles, and with free salsa classes at 9 on Tuesdays, there's just no reason not to partake.

LIGHTING

When we're hunting for the ideal lighting accent, we squeeze into Ferra's on La Brea, where the chandeliers are as menacing as stalactites, or into Skank World, Linda Gershon's Beverly Boulevard mecca of midcentury modern, where an Isamu Noguchi lamp will set you back, but not all the way back into penury. When we're after something a bit more cool, a touch more sensuous, a tad more sleek and trim, our choice is **Lampa + Möbler**. From the floor (literally) to the ceiling (naturally), there are lights made of plastic, linen, rosewood, satin nickel, and glass. Owner Diana Holmlund, a Stockholm native, imports most of her lamps from Italy and Spain "because the Italians are the best glassblowers and the Spanish have the finest linen shades." Among our favorites are Claesson Koivisto Rune's "Bon-Bons," textured and sandblasted white plastic lights in the shape of Madame Bovary's favorite chocolates; they double as stools and are tough enough to be tossed from a 20-story building without breaking. More subdued—and fragile—are Roberto Pamino's handblown glass scroll lamps, in white and orange hanging or table versions. You want to stroke the glass and trace the simple, elegant curve. These opaque laminated gems glow softly, like alabaster—a luminescence that will make any night, at table or in bed, unforgettable. That's task lighting nonpareil.



LISA ROMEREIN



KIDS' GYMNASTICS

Some preschool gymnastics classes resemble the inside of a nuclear reactor, with roly-poly bodies bouncing off one another in blissful anarchy. At Broadway Gymnastics, a two-year-old can have a blast working through the obstacle courses and cooling down on the trampoline. What makes Burbank's **Fun & Fit** superlative, though, is the instruction of Mike Eschenbrenner. He captivates his young charges and does something we considered well nigh impossible: gets herds of two- and three-year-olds to quiet down, listen, and follow his lead. Fun & Fit holds classes for kids of all ages; Eschenbrenner's groups usually get the floor to themselves, however, which helps his students feel comfortable and focused.



PLACE FOR GAY UNIONS

So you and your partner are ready to tie the knot. Can't make it to Vermont? A group wedding at the Abbey not quite the way you envisioned exchanging vows? Clad in full vestments, the clergy at **All Saints Church** in Pasadena will bless the unions of gay and lesbian parishioners in stately and thoughtful style. A member of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, All Saints features a Gothic stone chapel built in 1889 as well as a lavish altar complete with full choir and string quartet. The celebration of your love and commitment may not be recognized in the eyes of the law, but it definitely feels like the real thing.

COUNTRY-WESTERN ARTIST

The cosmic country music of Gram Parsons is alive and kicking in L.A. Its primary practitioner is reedy-voiced hipster **Mike Stinson**, whose hard-rocking honky-tonk is raising roofs and breaking hearts all over town, from the Scene in Glendale to the Cinema Bar in Culver City. His sound evokes Buck Owens's Bakersfield and Parsons's Joshua Tree. "Late Great Golden State," from his 2002 debut, *Jack of All Heartache*, was covered by Dwight Yoakam and should be California's official anthem. "Tomorrow's Gonna Hurt," from Stinson's new album, tentatively titled *The Last Fool at the Bar*, shows there are more instant classics where that came from. Backed by the sublimely cool former X guitarist Tony Gilkyson, drummer Jason Moore, and bassist James Ashhurst, Stinson may not offer blood, but his rollicking sets have plenty of sweat and beers.



89

Barbecue Equipment

Gas may be America's favorite way to grill. But it doesn't produce barbecue—a celebration of meat, cooked low and slow, always with wood. Barbeques Galore may be a big chain, but with showrooms full of hickory chips, pecan rubs, and mesquite briquettes, it still understands that the backyard cookout is as much a means as an end.

★

90

Travel Store

Magellan's carries everything we might need (adapters, travel clocks, money belts, rain ponchos, mini coffeemakers) and probably won't need (full-body bug nets, disposable underwear) for that next adventure. They also have a large selection of wrinkle-free clothing and can find just the right rolling bag or inflatable pillow to ensure happy travels.

★

91

Garden Pottery

On the sprawling grounds of North Hollywood's Jackalope, garden incarnations of Buddha, Saint Francis, and Indonesian totems coexist peacefully with Mexican *chimineas*, midcentury-modern slate fountains, and thousands of planters. A shack on the property also sells hot sauce and horse blankets. We're not sure why, but it works.

92

Vodka Menu

Voda, the Santa Monica vodka bar, has 100 bottles of cheer to choose from—rye or potato, domestic or imported. They skip the bottom tier, kicking off with the likes of Skyy and topping out with the Jewel of Russia, an 80 proof gem from the mother country.

★

93

Feed and Tack Store

At DeMoor's, you can choose from nine kinds of stall bedding and 24 kinds of grain as well as joint formula, stock tanks, barn carts, cute English riding jackets, Cruel Girl jeans, and a selection of mucking and riding boots that rivals the shoe department at Nordstrom. The staff is novice-friendly, too.

★

94

Monday-Night Dinner

Restaurants, like theaters, are often dark on Mondays. Some, though, offer themes as enticement. Our favorite is Campanile's "Family Night." Chef Mark Peel creates a three-course prix fixe menu ($35) that's unfussy, astutely seasonal, delicious, and leaves us free to make more important decisions: Will it be a Sancerre or a Riesling to start?



CHILDREN'S BOOKSTORE

The San Marino Toy and Book Shoppe is so stuffed with goodies that if you're in a hurry, you'd better ask for help, because you could spend hours browsing Betty Takeuchi's trove of playtime classics. New owner Matthew Abramowitz has reenergized Storyopolis, the upscale illustrators' gallery and bookstore on Robertson. Still, for kid-lit purists, it's hard to beat Sharon Hearn's **Children's Book World.** Hearn has an inventory of more than 75,000 titles, among them an impressive number in oft-neglected categories like works for middle readers and nonfiction. Customers cherish the ease with which the staff can find esoteric volumes and handle requests from three-year-olds such as "I like animals. Help me."

COMIC COMEBACK

His name may conjure borscht belt shtick, but **Shelley Berman** could not be hipper. Half a century after introducing his brand of neurotic and observational humor to viewers of *The Ed Sullivan Show*, Berman has earned himself a gig as Larry David's father on TV's edgiest comedy, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. At 78, he remains jittery and sly, profane and sentimental, still one of this town's most influential—and underappreciated—improvisationists. Students at USC have been availing themselves of his comic writing class for the past 19 years. For the rest of us, there's an occasional show at the Improv Olympic West, which recently honored Berman with a lifetime achievement award. "You probably don't even know me, for God's sake," he told the considerably younger crowd.





GUIDE TO CHINESE FOOD

From Chaozhou cooking to Hong Kong-style coffeehouses, Carl Chu takes us on a tour of the local culinary scene in **Finding Chinese Food in Los Angeles.** His tireless navigation through the "paradisiacal sandlot" of the San Gabriel Valley is indispensable when we're scouting the strip malls of Alhambra for *hubei doupi* and rock candy pork rump. Chu peppers his guide with illustrated primers on the different regional cuisines and genres in the city, making it easy to order with authority whenever the dim sum lady rolls past with her cart.

BOOKSTORE: HINDSE CHOI; CHINESE FOOD: GETTY IMAGES



WEDDING GOWNS

We've all been there, fixed on a hard church pew while a beaming bride floats down the aisle in what looks like a shiny doily. Even normally chic dressers seem to mistake excess for exuberance in their wedding attire. The selection at R. Mine Bridal Couture walks the line between tradition and restraint, with ivory-colored dresses by Oscar de la Renta, Amsale, Reem Acra, Elie Saab, and owner Armine Ohanessian. The smartest selection of gowns, however, is at **Monique Lhuillier**, in Beverly Hills. Lhuillier, who graduated from L.A.'s Fashion Institute, launched her bridal line in 1996, and she's made plenty of fans, including Jennifer Connelly, Holly Hunter, Megan Mullally, and Natalie Imbruglia (who wore an ivory V-neck creation at her nuptials). With white leather Minotti chairs and white cement floors, her minimalist store features evening wear along one wall, bridal dresses along the other, and a warm, accommodating staff who will gladly do rush alterations for fast-breaking weddings. Most important, though, is the elegance and sheer range of Lhuillier's designs. There are gowns with plunging lace necklines, gowns with white fur bolero jackets, gowns with silk bows cinched at the waist, gowns with halter necklines, and dozens of others—more than enough to outfit J.Lo for the next three years.

RACHEL WEILL

PERFUME COUNTER



The allure of the perfume selection at **Barneys New York** starts with the display—one stunning bottle after another whispering "Try me." Carthusia floats in square glass with a vintage spray pump (it dates back to 1681) not far from I Profumi di Firenze, which recently debuted here with ten scents, and the collection by Serge Lutens, another new launch. Barneys is the place for those niche brands you won't find emblazoned on billboards or wafting up from scent strips. Their latest exclusive: Susanne Lang's fragrant wonders (mixed into a custom cocktail at the counter) started arriving last month. The assortment (dangerously close to the shoes) is enhanced by the people behind the glass: Each time we linger, someone gives us another tidbit of rarefied olfactory knowledge.

PRENATAL YOGA CLASS



Yogi/earth mother Rocki Graham knows just what her with-child students want: a not-too-strenuous workout that will keep joints limber and backaches at bay. **Yoga Baby** classes, held in a converted garage behind her home, are popular among both the newly preggers and those about to pop. Graham, who has been teaching prenatal yoga for 15 years and developed the prenatal program for YogaWorks, demonstrates the poses, and she keeps cool water on hand, the room well ventilated, and Tums nearby for those inevitable bouts of heartburn. Did we mention the bathroom breaks? Classes end with a meditation in which students "look" into their wombs. "Tell your baby it's perfect the way it is," says Graham, "that it doesn't need to change anything for you." Pregnancy never felt so good.

THE BEST OF LA' 2004 *Written and reported by Tessa Benson, Anne Breza, Alice Calamar, Kathleen Clark, Margot Dougherty, Danny Feingold, Benjamin Friedland, Dave Gardetta, Pleasant Gehman, Greg Goldin, Andrew Harmon, Robert Ito, Jesse Katz, Joe Kimberling, Leslee Komaiko, Patric Kuh, Ed Leibowitz, Jason Levin, Kari Mozena, Chris Nichols, Tony Peyser, Haward Rodman, Erin Rottman, Matthew Segal, RJ Smith, Heather Somers, Ariel Swartley, Daphne Tanyol, Joshua Tompkins, Mary Trahan, Karen Wada, Amy Wallace, Wesla Weller, Jiyeon Yoo*



WAY TO SPEND YOUR LAST DOLLAR

If we were down to our last dollar, we'd deposit it with the city's **Cultural Affairs Department**. The department provides financial support to local artists and arts organizations, runs community arts centers, and backs festivals and other programs. In April its $11.8 million budget—already one-tenth that of New York City—was slashed by almost 30 percent. Mayor James Hahn originally intended to do away with the department altogether; now he wants to use a portion of the remaining budget to promote the major cultural institutions of Los Angeles—the Getty Center, Disney Hall, et al.—as tourist attractions. We're all for promoting the Philharmonic, but not at the expense of needier groups like the East West Players and individual artists who rely on assistance. At a time when L.A. has come into its own as a leader in the arts, depriving that community of funding is shortsighted and foolhardy.



For a portable index featuring the addresses and phone numbers of L.A.'s best, open the flap.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MINDEE CHOI; ISTOCK; RACHEL WEILL



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HUMMER OF WEST COVINA
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INDEX

1. NEW BAR
The Chalet 1630 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock, 323-258-8800

2. HOT DOG
Pink's 709 N. La Brea Ave., Hollywood, 323-931-4223 or **www.pinkshollywood.com**

3. VINTAGE BATHROOM FIXTURES
Square Deal Plumbing Supply 2302 E. Florence Ave., Huntington Park, 323-587-8291

4. BOARD SHORTS
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5. ATTACHÉ CASES
H. Savinar Luggage 4625 W. Washington Blvd., 323-938-2501. Also at 6931 Tepanga Canyon Blvd., Canoga Park, 818-703-1313

6. HOME THEATER INSTALLER
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7. GIFT BASKETS Star Treatment 800-444-9059 or **www.startreatment.com**

8. SOUL FOOD Flossie's Healthy Home Cooking 3566 Redondo Beach Blvd., Torrance, 310-352-4037

9. THREADING
Eneesa Aromatherapy 8013½ Melrose Ave., 323-655-5950 or **www.eneesa.com**

10. BED LINENS Statements 8371 Melrose Ave., 323-655-4521

11. GOURMET CAFETERIA Lemon Moon 12200 W. Olympic Blvd., West L.A., 310-442-9191 or **www.lemonmoon.com**

12. BALLOON SCULPTOR
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14. SWIMMING POOL Santa Monica Swim Center 2225 16th St., Santa Monica, 310-458-8700 or **www.swim.santa-monica.org**

15. SALAD
Jaan Raffles L'Ermitage 9291 Burton Way, Beverly Hills, 310-278-3344 or **www.jaanrestaurant.com**

16. FURNITURE RESTORATION
Classic Design 19771 Magellan Dr., Torrance, 310-324-1600 or **www.classicdesignla.com**

17. ROASTED CHICKEN
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23. KIDS' SHOES
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25. KARAOKE Brass Monkey 659 S. Mariposa Ave., 213-381-7047

26. CHURCH CHOIR
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A.O.C. 8022 W. 3rd St., 323-653-6359

28. ESPRESSO
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29. ORCHIDS Orchid Fever 10242 Culver Blvd., Culver City, 310-559-6599

30. OUTDOOR BAR Downtown Standard 550 S. Flower St., 213-892-8080 or **www.standardhotel.com**

31. TAXIDERMIST Bischoff's Taxidermy 54 E. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank, 818-843-7561 or **www.bischoffs.net**

32. MAGIC SUPPLIES
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33. EASY HIKE
Mt. Wilson Toll Rd. Driving north on Allen Ave. in Pasadena, turn right on Pinecrest Dr. and continue for about 2 blocks. Toll Rd. is on your left

34. PIANOS
David L. Abell Fine Pianos 8162 Beverly Blvd., 323-651-3060

35. CANDLE SELECTION
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36. BABY STORE Kid's Land U.S.A. 3807 Wilshire Blvd., 213-487-9090

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Fleur de Leigh's Life of Crime* and *Fleur de Leigh in Exile by Diane Leslie (Simon & Schuster)

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39. ITALIAN RESTAURANT
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Kicks: Sole Provider 143 N. Larchmont Blvd., 323-468-9794

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44. STRING QUARTET
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310-446-6358 or **armadillo4@aol.com**

45. CUPCAKES
Joan's on Third 8350 W. 3rd St., 323-655-2285 or **www.joansonthird.com**

46. GOLF SECRET
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47. KENNEL
Kennel Club LAX 5325 W. 102nd St., 310-338-9166 or **www.kennelclublax.com**

48. TELESCOPE STORE
Scope City 14324 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks, 818-789-5805. For other locations, visit **www.scopecity.com**

49. YEGAN RESTAURANT
Native Foods 11101/2 Gayley Ave., Westwood, 310-209-1055 or **www.eatnativefoods.com**

50. SCRAPBOOKING SUPPLIES
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51. RADIO SPORTS-TALK HOST
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L.A. Rocking Chair Store
304 S. La Brea Ave., 323-937-7858 or **www.larockingchair.com**

53. BLOW OUT
Natalia Brusch Fred Segal Beauty 420 Broadway, Santa Monica, 310-451-5155 or **www.fredsegalbeauty.com**

54. KNITTING SUPPLIES
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55. GELATERIA Gelato Caffe 6401-1 Platt Ave., West Hills, 818-347-3737

56. WAY TO FLY
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Fullerton Municipal Airport, 230 N. Dale Pl., Fullerton, 800-522-7590 or **www.aircombatusa.com**

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Hollywood Hatters 6915 Melrose Ave., Hollywood, 323-525-1912 or **www.hollywoodhatters.com**

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59. PET BIRDS
Omar's Exotic Birds 8729 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-659-6552 or **www.omarsexoticbirds.com**

60. JEWELRY REPAIR
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4419 Lankershim Blvd., Toluca Lake, 818-763-5151 or **www.altobelli.com**

61. OFFBEAT GUIDE TO L.A.
Southern California edition of *Tours for Free California* by Jodi Jill (BentLight Media)

62. COSTUMES
Hollywood Toys & Costumes 6600 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-464-4444 or **www.hollywoodtoys.com**

63. PEDICURE
Genia Gregorian Four Seasons Hotel, 300 S. Doheny Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-273-2222 or **www.fourseasons.com**

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65. COOKWARE
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69. ANTIQUE WATCHES
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72. RECORD STORE
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83. MALT
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84. DANCING
Bang! The Ruby, 7070 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-467-7070 or **www.clubbang.net**. **Club Screwball** The Parlour Club, 7702 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, 323-650-7968 or **www.theparlourclub.com**. **King King** 6555 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-960-5765 or **www.kingkinghollywood.com**

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86. KIDS' GYMNASTICS
Fun & Fit Gymnastics 1919 W. Burbank Blvd., Burbank, 818-845-0700. Also at 21021 Soledad Canyon Rd., Santa Clarita, 661-255-7244 or **www.fungymfit.com**

87. PLACE FOR GAY UNIONS
All Saints Church
132 N. Euclid Ave., Pasadena, 626-796-1172 or **www.allsaints-pas.org**

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92. VODKA MENU Voda 1449 2nd St., Santa Monica, 310-394-9774

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94. MONDAY-NIGHT DINNER
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96. COMIC COMEBACK
Shelley Berman **www.shelleyberman.com**

97. GUIDE TO CHINESE FOOD
Finding Chinese Food in Los Angeles: A Guide to Regional Chinese Cuisines by Carl Chu (Crossbridge Publishing Co.)

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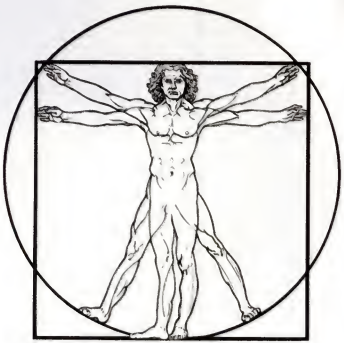
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GREEN PARTY: A salad is sprinkled with black sesame seeds and tapped with shredded fried taro

SpiceBox

Michelia's subtle cuisine reflects chef Kimmy Tang's Vietnamese childhood by Patric Kuh

KIMMY TANG REMEMBERS afternoon tea at the Hotel Rex in central Saigon. When she was a child her parents would take her there on special occasions. The ceilings were high, the fans always turning, and because of the French influence in Vietnam, a croissant might be found among the pastries. Though the glass teapots that dot the tables at Tang's small 3rd Street dining room are not quite an attempt to re-create such a scene, they do indicate the extent to which her restaurant, Michelia, is suffused with the spirit of her past.

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Tang names two dates in her life as being particularly important. The first is March 26, 1986, the day she arrived in the United States. Sponsored by an uncle in Bakersfield, she spent years working there while she learned English. Even then she saw herself as something of a culinary groundbreaker; she ordered fish sauce to stock in the market she helped manage. The second date is June 22, 2001, the day she opened her own restaurant in L.A. She toyed with generic Asian names such as Lemongrass and Bamboo before settling on Michelia, for a tree whose flowers have a sweet smell that pervades Vietnam's parks and streets. She found one growing in a San Gabriel nursery, and it stands by her restaurant's entrance.

Michelia is across from the Unocal station on the last commercial block of 3rd Street before it enters a neighborhood of apartment buildings and shady jacaranda trees in Beverly Hills. Outside are a few tables on a little terrace. The interior combines earth-toned suede upholstery, one of those stone walls of water, and a small stained-wood counter behind which many teas are made. One only has to spot Tang, a small figure who might rush out of the kitchen in bonnet and sneakers between orders to check on her diners, to understand that this is a restaurant wholly built around her personality and her vision of food.

Fusion cooking has gotten a bad rap, deservedly so, as it's now a term that sanctions any combination of ingredients. Tang steers away from the category and calls her cuisine "nouvelle Vietnamese," allowing herself a certain leeway.

Hers is a delicate cuisine that has adapted the cooking of Vietnam by drawing upon influences from several neighboring countries and yet denaturing none. Spiciness is toned down, fat content lowered, sweetness adjusted, and many dishes are transformed by the use of light coconut juice instead of coconut milk. But what has made me return to Michelia recently is Tang's ability to

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achieve a sense of complexity while highlighting particular flavors. A lunchtime appetizer of deep-fried tofu cubes crusted with black and white sesame seeds captures this contradiction. The textures of the crisped outside and trembling inside play off each other; the seeds, hot from the fryer, impart a rounded, toasted, and wholly satisfying note. The cubes quiver, they beckon, and they are quickly gone.

At $8.95 the five-minicourse lunch special is the best deal in the entire neighborhood. The stir-frys are great stir-frys, not the contents of a fridge tossed in a wok, like so many lunchtime specials. One of the entrées that I particularly like is the *bento* box with *panko*-breaded crispy sole served with a roe-colored mayonnaise spiked with fiery chili paste.

At dinner the Asian latitudes are explored to full effect. This is the time to start with the wide selection of fried rolls, steamed dumplings, and seared potstickers that are rolled as neatly as bed corners at a Mandarin Hotel and rushed from the kitchen hot. Of these I find the Saigon rolls to be the best. First it's the translucence of the soft rice wraps, then it's the crunch of the strands of jicama, cucumber, black mushrooms, and shredded carrots packed as tightly as wires in a DSL cable. Finally, it's the flavor burst of the shrimp sautéed with lime leaves, chili, and ginger.

Entrées come in a flurry of basil and plum sauce. The ingredients are varied, and so are the techniques. Sea bass is delicately steamed in a banana leaf. Salmon is marinated in star anise, lemongrass, honey, and lime and then panfried. The subtlety of this dish and its barely audible suggestions of the Far East have brought me to that state of willful delusion that the reading of Marguerite Duras novels can induce: For a second I'm not on 3rd Street at all but wearing a linen suit on the deck of a ferry on the Mekong.

The item I urge you to order is, at $27.95, the most expensive on Michelia's menu. You do, however, get a full pound of king crab legs wok fried, lacquered with a thin layer of black pepper and chili, and served under a drift of just-cooked tender scallions. You've perhaps experienced a similar-sounding rendition in some Chinese restaurants and so are aware of the cornstarch gloppiness that can mar it. This is

SIDE ORDER



CRUMBLED DREAMS: Goat cheese is sprinkled over Tamarin's eggplant salad

Hitting the High Note

THE FIRST ITEMS THAT are put before you at a restaurant often tell the most about the place. At Tamarin these are *pappadum*, the large lentil-flour wafers. Here they're sprinkled with cumin seeds and served alongside ramekins of homemade chutneys, one made from tamarind, the other from pounded green chili, mint, and cilantro. The freshness and vibrancy of these condiments impart the note that runs throughout the menu.

Neither a cut-rate palace with nylon napkins nor a cosmically slanted and spiritually named curry mill, Tamarin avoids the traps that Indian restaurants too often fall into. It is the achievement of Uma Singh, owner and chef, and her general manager, Brij Singh, a friend of many years' standing. Together they have turned a kosher deli in a strip mall on Olympic into a veritable lodestar for lovers of Indian food.

Tamarin is located between a Quiznos and a skin salon. There is something restful immediately upon entering. It might be the muted terra-cotta palette used in the decoration, the murmur of running water from a stone fountain, or the discretion with which the Indian touches are deployed. A suggestion of great elegance is sustained by an antique wooden palace door and an elevated window casement. Should chef Singh be table-hopping as you enter, she is likely to fix you with a look, from under thin eyebrows, whose intensity would do justice to a Bollywood star and whose effect is to make you sit and behave.

A former partner at Nizam in Westwood, Singh describes her cooking as "contemporary Indian-inspired cuisine with a European accent." Sounds complicated, but in her hands it's not. The scent of freshly ground spices radiates from her food and combines with the polish that comes from being made to order. To appreciate this you need only order the samosas. Not cooked ahead, not a token dish as in so many restaurants, at Tamarin they are prepared with care, fried at the last minute, and served hot. That's a lot of work for a $4 payoff. Most restaurants wouldn't consider it worth the effort. —*P.K.*

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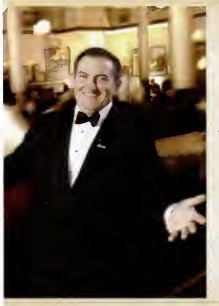
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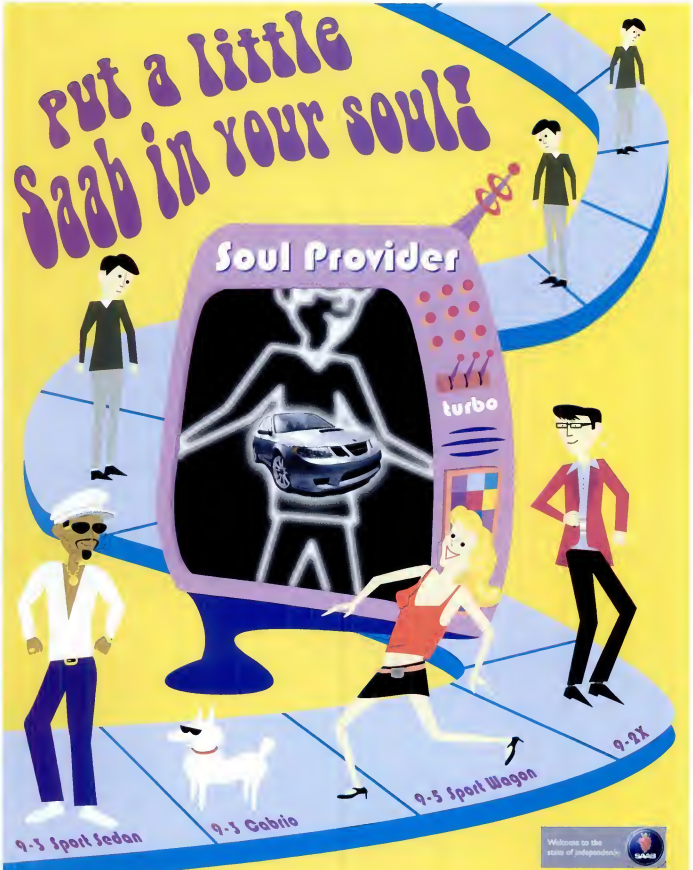


MS. SAIGON: Michelia's chef Tang

meant to be a dish of great purity, one in which the soft texture of the scallions plays off the crab's hard shell, and the dominant marine flavors are accentuated by an herbal whisper. Tang's version is—and one doesn't use the word often—perfect.

A dynamo of energy, Tang does all the shopping for the restaurant, transporting the produce across town from the Asian markets of Rosemead and Alhambra in her Mazda MPV van. All the same, the restaurant would gain if she were able to find more time for desserts. They are of the mousse- and green tea– and litchi-flavored ice cream variety. Bought rather than made, they sustain the Asian theme of her food but lose its personal note. I prefer to end on a pot of hot tea.

There is a strange paradox to living in L.A., and restaurants are often the place where one becomes aware of it most. The more real someone makes their place of origin, the more real L.A. itself becomes. As I walked out of Michelia on a recent evening, I saw city crews up on cherry pickers working on telephone poles in the alley behind the restaurant. Vin Scully's play-by-play sounded from the open window of one of their trucks. Across the street, under the eaves of the Unocal station, the Dr Pepper machine hummed. In the glow of dusk it was an "I love L.A." moment. I knew it was due to those crab legs. They in turn could be traced to memories of tea in a once-grand Saigon hotel. LA



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FILM

Spaghetti Easterns

On the rise of a new film archetype: the samurai cowboy

by Steve Erickson

ZHANG YIMOU'S 'HERO' IS THE STORY of a third-century assassin who sets out to murder China's oppressive emperor, and it's one of the most gorgeous films ever made. By comparison, Zhang's rapturous *Raise the Red Lantern*, which was nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Film in 1991, has all the visual splendor of *Garfield: The Movie*. More startling still—after the studied classicism of films like *Red Sorghum*, *Ju Dou*, and *To Live* (which were either suppressed or banned in Zhang's native land)—is how such a major director so unabashedly emulates the work of other directors, including some who are his contemporaries or even his protégés. Besides the fanciful lyricism that Zhang appears to have borrowed from *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the dramatic tone is operatic in the manner of Sergio Leone. The assassin is even called "Nameless," a Leone-esque figure who's calm in the face of the maelstrom before him, like Clint Eastwood's so-called Man With No Name, who, in three Leone films, actually had three names. Thus *Hero* has been influenced not only by the anglicized Taiwan director Ang Lee, who made *Crouching Tiger* after adaptations of Jane Austen and Rick Moody and who himself was influenced by Hong Kong director Tsui Hark, who went to school in Texas, but by Leone's Italian movies about the American West that were influenced by the samurai films of Akira Kurosawa, who was influenced by the westerns of John Ford.

Confusion is the whole point of this genealogy. It doesn't seem an accident that *Hero* bears the imprimatur of Quentin Tarantino (as in "Quentin Tarantino Presents"), whose most recent film, *Kill Bill: Vol. 2*, comes out this month on DVD. In *Kill Bill* Tarantino slices and dices, mixes and matches samurai choreography, Hong Kong action, Japanese *anime*, spaghetti-western grandeur, Eurotrash porn, white-trash exploitation, and tacky '60s/'70s American TV like a chef over a Benihana grill, with dashes of Romanian pan flutes, Ennio Morricone whistles, Nancy Sinatra laments, and three Japanese punkettes singing "I Walk Like Jayne Mansfield." This sort of thing is old hat by now. It's all the more to Tarantino's credit, then, that somehow he still makes it seem like an epiphany. Yes, you have to distrust Tarantino's status as the coolest man in Hollywood, and he's so full of himself that you want to stuff a sock in his mouth every time he opens it. But he has the passion of his pop references—he believes in them—and his sheer moviemaking moxie may be the smartest and most visceral of any American director since Scorsese. There's enough heart in the second installment of *Kill Bill*, with its splendid performances by Uma Thurman and David Carradine, that it's not hard to imagine that Tarantino's best movie already has been made even as it remains unseen: namely, the three-hour version of *Kill Bill* that should have been released in the first place.

At what point the mongrelization of world art passed from being an affectation

to a vision (before passing back to affectation) is impossible to say. More than 20 years ago avant-popster Brian Eno, working with coconspirators such as Jon Hassell and David Byrne, was shuffling Western electronic ambient sounds with Arab and Asian and African musical motifs like a tarot deck. Purists and the politically correct protested, concerned about cultural integrity and exploitation, but in pop art, authenticity has always been the enemy of audacity. As far as the movies are concerned, it's now clear that a seminal moment was 1982's *Blade Runner*. A critical and box-office failure on its release, it's become the single most influential film of the last several decades. Not only is *Blade Runner*'s concept of place ambiguous, what with ancient cultures seeping into the only city (Los Angeles) that could credibly provide a landscape for such ambiguity, but the concept of time is porous, too, ancient centuries oozing in through the temporal rips of the 21st.









CHOP CHOP: ***(clockwise from top) 'Zatôichi'; 'Hero'; 'Kill Bill: Vol. 2'; 'Twilight Samurai'***

After *Blade Runner*, the future no longer was what it used to be. More than a matter of technology and its limits, the future became a revolt against linearity; so compelling was *Blade Runner*'s vision of the future, so original and persuasive, that without it, other future-visions that already have become totemic—William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer*, the anime landmark *Akira*, the Wachowski brothers' *The Matrix*—might have been inconceivable. On an even more impressive scale, if you've been to Tokyo or Hong Kong any time in the last ten years, those cities' juxtapositions of style and sensibility, now almost as perfunctory as they are mind-boggling, seem as much to be fulfilling the brainstorms of *Blade Runner* director Ridley Scott, production designer Lawrence Paull, and soundtrack composer Vangelis as those of any urban planner. How many movies anticipate whole metropolises? For his score, the Greek-born Vangelis introduced bluesy noir trumpets to Chinese voices and Middle Eastern themes while elegantly ripping off the German band Kraftwerk. For their part, Scott and Paull were inspired by California writer Philip K. Dick, who wrote the novel on which *Blade Runner* was based; in turn Dick's work was inspired by the I-Ching and Far Eastern notions of reality, order, and chaos.

NOTIONS OF REALITY, order, and chaos play no small part in a new Asian film vogue so dizzying that it's getting hard to keep the movies straight. This vogue was kick-started by the martial arts sequences of *The Matrix* and *Crouching Tiger*, which were a revelation for Western audiences unfamiliar with Tsui Hark's *Once upon a Time in China* or Ronny Yu's fabulous, hallucinatory *Bride with White Hair*. *Crouching Tiger* offered the West a whole new way of thinking about the fantastic. It had enough emotional urgency and was tethered enough to psychological and even historical reference points in the "real world" to raise it out of the realm of fairy tale. In the years since, the stateside popularity of Asian films has exploded. This summer sees the domestic release of not only *Hero* but *Twilight Samurai* and *Zatôichi* from cult director Takeshi Kitano. *Twilight Samurai* is about an aging warrior, and *Zatôichi* is the latest in a series of enormously popular Japanese movies about a samurai who is blind. Zhang Yimou's film after *Hero*, which already has screened at Cannes, is *House of Flying Daggers*, recalling by accident or design the House of Blue Leaves in *Kill Bill: Vol. 1*. If some of the popularity of Asian films has to do with the usual vagaries of style, it's hard to believe that, in an age of chaos that arrived three Septembers ago, something else isn't at work. Zatôichi's blindness would seem a crucial part of his appeal in a century when it feels like someone has turned off the lights.

In *Hero*, Nameless and his fellow assassin, Snow, played by Jet Li and the magnificent Maggie Cheung, mow down armies of thousands and turn back rain after rain of lethal arrows. These aren't

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: MIRAMAX (3); EMPIRE PICTURES



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portrayed as acts of any sorcery other than the untapped magic of the human will; they're acts of faith and self-belief, as much philosophical as physical, by which a single person can impose order on a world of havoc. Their actions have little of the stoic, laconic bravado of Eastwood in the Leone pictures. Bravado is a lapse in a discipline that counts for more than actual skill. In all of these movies, lone figures take on a malevolent world and prevail because they're in tune with some tone of the spheres that hums beneath or above or around the noisy conceits of civilization; and if, as in *Hero*, such a triumph ultimately involves the hero's own demise, it's by his or her choice. Self-sacrifice is only another weapon in the arsenal of combat. Often it's the most powerful weapon.

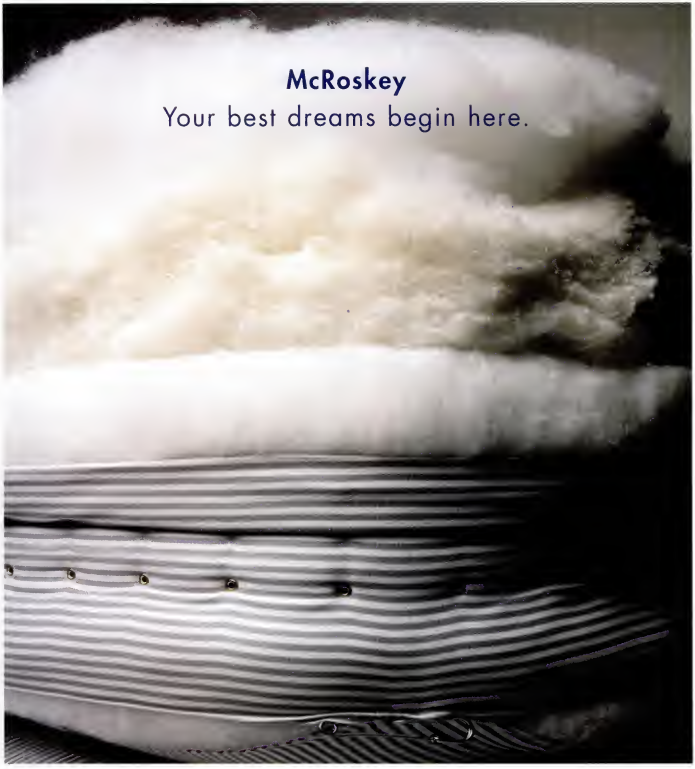
THIS IS THE SCARIEST time of our lives. During the cold war we knew where all the bombs were and who controlled them, and we were more or less confident that our adversaries shared our horror at the prospect of obliteration and thus were checked by it. In Eastern eyes, anarchy is almost always a negative by definition; America, on the other hand, wasn't only born out of anarchy, anarchy is part of its DNA. The defining manifesto of American freedom, the Bill of Rights, is nothing if not an anarchic document, codifying circumstances in which the freedom of the one trumps even what might apparently be the well-being of the many, because paradoxically in so doing the freedom of the many is also preserved. *Hero*'s political subtext is that freedom, even justice, must be expendable in the name of nationalism or, as the film has it, in the name of "the land." By such lights freedom isn't just a luxury, it's a bit immature, adolescent. Regardless of whatever higher principle the samurai code might also serve, the code exists in its own service, in the service of the very idea that there simply *must be a code*. When the anarchic possibilities of freedom give way to the terrifying anarchy of people crashing planes into buildings, the exaltation of order as the highest governing principle of human behavior suddenly becomes irresistible.

All of which, I realize, is not altogether fair. When the most enduring image of freedom and defiance in the last half century is that of a young nameless Chinese man standing before a row of tanks, suggesting that an Asian aesthetic inherently values order over freedom may be a kind of blasphemy. Conversely, the fascination of many American films for both those of us who live here and for many around the world who don't—including a director like Kurosawa—lies not so much in the choice of chaos over order, or the choice of individual freedom over the social good, but in the tension between these things. This is truest of that most Western of Western movies: the western. In the greatest of them, from Ford's *My Darling Clementine* in the '40s to Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* a quarter century after that to Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* a quarter century after that, chaos and order shoot it out in the street and what's left standing is about as much human freedom as can be allowed or managed within the demands of security and the boundaries of authority. Howard Hawks's 1948 classic *Red River* is *Mutiny on the Bounty* transposed to a cattle drive, with John Wayne as a tyrannical Captain Bligh trail boss and Montgomery Clift as a Fletcher Christian rebel, who, chafing at Wayne's iron hand, finally takes over the tyrant's herd. Tellingly, when the two men come to blows at the end of the movie, neither wins nor loses. Instead, one of those inevitably feisty Hawksian women comes along to talk some sense into them.

Partly because genre deals in archetypes, the conflict between chaos and order in genre movies is most stark. In crime films, that conflict often isn't so much fought out between the criminal and the law as among thieves whose code can't be violated without dishonor or consequence. In science fiction, all the chaos and order of how people get along is compounded by the chaos and order wreaked by technology. In *Blade Runner* the city is spectacular bedlam, and the very meaning of humanity is precarious; *Blade Runner* thrills at its own pandemonium, and so do we. When some semblance of order does come to *Blade Runner*, it is represented by the agent of chaos, Rutger Hauer's android. Sacrificing himself at the end of the movie to save Harrison Ford—the man who's been trying to exterminate him—Hauer's dying reverie in the rain offers a moment of grace that the agent of order, Ford, is incapable of matching or even comprehending.

If you've been to Tokyo or Hong Kong, their juxtapositions of style and sensibility seem as much to be fulfilling the brainstorms of *Blade Runner*'s makers as those of any urban planner.

Whether it's one more instance of Quentin Tarantino's film savvy or just coincidence, the climax of *Blade Runner* is echoed by the climax of *Kill Bill*. In the way that Tarantino mixes film styles so freewheelingly, he mixes cultural ethoses, too, and in *Kill Bill* our perceptions of chaos and order are upended. Left for dead at the beginning of the first volume, cruelly robbed of her child, and with the aid of a ruthless Eastern teacher, Uma Thurman wreaks havoc everywhere she goes in the name of a mother's righteous vengeance; the justice she brings, wrought from violence, imposes its own higher order. Nothing quite aligns the crazy planets of your life like redemption. In the end, the order of things—in the form of Carradine's Bill, the man who's half East and half West—acquiesces to a Zen grace and an acceptance of doom. It's a Ridley Scott moment, or maybe a Zhang Yimou moment. It's an Akira Kurosawa moment, or maybe a Sergio Leone moment. East may always be East, and West may always be West. But the twain have met at the movies. LA



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WILL BITE: Scott Grieger, 'Beware of God,' 1996

ART

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'100 Artists See God' asks more questions than it answers

by Bernard Cooper

AFTER BEING COMMISSIONED by Independent Curators International, an arts organization based in New York, to put together a traveling show, Los Angeles artists John Baldessari and Meg Cranston waited for inspiration to strike. In spring of 2002, six months after the attack on the World Trade Center, inspiration obliged.

Baldessari has long held an international reputation for his photo-based conceptual work, and Cranston, who has a degree in anthropology and espouses a kind of art-therapy grrrl power, is just now establishing her reputation with installations that have included life-size piñatas of herself. With *100 Artists See God* (Laguna Art Museum, August 1 to October 3), they hoped to produce an exhibit that shed some light on whether God had become as crucial and incendiary a subject in art as it had in world events, given the rise of fundamentalism, the scandals in the Catholic Church, and the ongoing struggles over gay marriage, abortion, and stem cell research. If religion played a pivotal role in the issues of the day, did art, in turn, reflect religion's pivotal role? It's a compelling line of inquiry, one not frequently addressed in contemporary art, though art making is predicated on the essentially religious belief that it is possible to reveal, and share with others, extraordinary forces operating in the world around us. The curators were wise to leave the definition of God open-ended, allowing for a variety of aesthetic responses. But then, oddly, they went about selecting artists "because we were fans of their work, not because they had necessarily done an artwork about god," and decided from the outset to take whatever the artists gave them.

This "method" of selection disregards the fact that religion is a matter of passion—if it weren't for conviction, stricture, and ritual, people would worship at the Little Chapel of Apathy or Temple Beth-Whatever. By including so many artists for whom religion is not necessarily a matter of personal importance, the show sidesteps much of the rigor through which groups and individuals strive to understand, and strengthen their connection to, a higher power. As a result, the work is sometimes flippant and disengaged.

The artists were given the option of contributing a statement to accompany their work, and a number try valiantly to articulate how otherwise irrelevant submissions relate to the show's theme. Jorge Pardo, who often designs furniture for his installations (commissioned by MOCA to create an artwork, Pardo built himself a house in Mount Washington), says of his angular chartreuse coffee table, *Untitled* (2002), "If there is a God, a small table containing a few instruments of habit, and functioning as a place to rest your feet on, might be as good an invitation for the presence of a deity as any." The problem with such a slack rationale is that

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one could draw similar conclusions all day; a rubber band or a kitchen sink might invite the deity, too, all of which would imply not that God was everywhere but that He was *anywhere*, which makes omniscience sound like indecision. Artist Christopher Williams at least owns up to his pessimism; his photograph of yellow plates in a dishwasher is joined with the comment "Show me an angel and I'll gladly paint you one." One wonders, though, why yellow dishes? Do yellow dishes challenge the existence of angels more effectively than, say, blue dishes?

CERTAINLY ATHEISTS and agnostics can imagine God as vividly as the devout. Skepticism is rooted in conviction as much as faith is. It's reasonable to expect that there will be doubters among the 100 artists, but only a handful make their doubt provocative. Take Scott Grieger's hand-painted sign *Beware of God* (1996). It's impossible to look at it, a jarringly blunt pun and caveat, without tensing reflexively in anticipation of His wrath.

Catherine Opie, an exceptionally clear-eyed photographer, offers *They See God, I See Hate* (1984), which captures Christian fundamentalists protesting at a gay rights rally. Their placards stridently predict eternal damnation for homosexuals and non-Christians. Those wielding the signs would condemn Opie as a moral relativist, which is precisely—or relatively—her point.

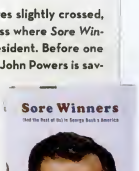
Victoria Reynolds's knockout of a painting, *For the Carnal in Dante's Hell* (1999), is based on a passage from the poet's *Divine Comedy: Inferno, Canto V*. The small, oval abstract painting resembles a slab of raw meat in close-up, with its striated fibers and marbled fat. If you stare long enough, the pale fat begins to resemble scumbled clouds passing over a hellish landscape. The carnality of the piece is intensified by a baroque frame encrusted with decorative leaves in the same raw shade of red. Delicate yet oppressive, the painting makes a viewer ready to transcend the flesh right then and there.

A few of the artists resort to tired shock tactics. Michael Craig-Martin's painting of a hot pink urinal reeks, if you will, of forced naughtiness that is made

NONFICTION

Seismic Shifts

A QUICK GLANCE AT THE COVER PHOTO—George W., eyes slightly crossed, lips pursed in a chimplike grimace—and it's easy to guess where *Sore Winners* (Doubleday, 272 pages, $25) stands on the reigning president. Before one can ask "Is our children learning?," *L.A. Weekly* media critic John Powers is savaging Bush as a liar and a hypocrite, a terrible businessman and a hopeless moron—then tearing into the media and the Democrats for not calling Dubya on his many faults.



If all of this sounds familiar, well, it should: Bush-bashing books are hot, one of the few genres to challenge Harry Potter and low-carb diets on best-seller lists. *Sore Winners* rises above the shrieking din with its mix of pop culture criticism (the chapter on social Darwinism and *American Idol* is bitchily insightful) and its depressing yet dead-on examination of what Powers terms "Bush World" (the optimistic epilogue is titled—you guessed it—"Escape from Bush World"). Despite the writer's tendency to describe the administration in the most hideous terms (U.S. deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage is a "balding blob of scowls who looked like Robert Duvall's Colonel Kilgore after a quarter century of Twinkies"), the book is fairly evenhanded, attacking the Democrats' ineffectiveness, Gore's smug cluelessness, and Bush's foreign policy blunders with equal glee.

FOR MANY SKEPTICS, earthquake prediction lies somewhere in the same league as water divining, part guesswork and pseudoscience as likely to attract quacks and the Apocalypse obsessed as legitimate researchers. In *The Myth of Solid Ground: Earthquakes, Prediction, and the Fault Line Between Reason and Faith* (Viking, 282 pages, $25), David L. Ulin explores the often weird world of the "predictors," individuals who can sense the onset of a temblor through changes in the weather, body aches and migraines, unusual animal behavior, and even the presence of "giant finger-pointing clouds" that appear directly over quake zones.



As goofy as a lot of it may seem, the stakes in this are so high, and some of the predictions so eerily on target, that one is leery of rejecting any of them out of hand. There's plenty of intriguing work being done by university professors and the United States Geological Survey, but the book's real fun comes from fringe dwellers like Charlotte King, an Oregon woman who can predict precisely where an earthquake will hit based on where her body aches (left back pain—watch out, Honshu). Ulin, the editor of *Another City: Writing from Los Angeles*, treats it all with a cautious respect, perhaps aware of the general belief among seismologists and geologists that as with the theory of plate tectonics, which was laughed at mere decades ago and now forms the basis of earthquake research, the field of earthquake prediction will likely make its next quantum leap with a hypothesis once dismissed by scientists or one yet to be imagined. —*Robert Ito*

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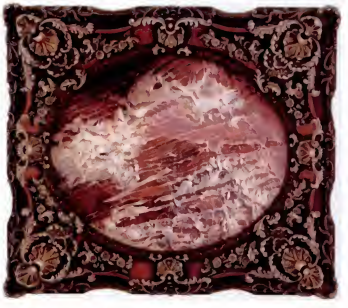
CARUSO AFFILIATED

only more jaded by its reference to artist Marcel Duchamp exhibiting an actual urinal in 1917. Others succumb to embarrassing piety. Leonard Nimoy (yes, of *Star Trek*) aims to embody in his photograph *Shekhina* (2002) the feminine aspects of Judaism. Shekhina, in this incarnation, looks like a moody Semitic supermodel in peekaboo lingerie.

Between cynicism and piety there's lots of room for God to manifest. The best work in the show takes that leap of imagination necessary in the realms of art and faith. These artists aren't timid about proselytizing; they urge us to join their fold. Tony Oursler, for example, shows *DOGOD* (2003), part of his ongoing series of DVD projections, in which a disembodied head exhorts the viewer with a nonsensical sermon. Seeing an Oursler projection (as those who recently visited his show at the Margo Leavin gallery in West Hollywood will attest) is like stumbling upon a mirage who makes eye contact and talks back. "He knows everything," Oursler says of the ineffable DOGOD, "but won't tell for reasons that are still obscure." The androgynous Asian face wears heavy makeup and possesses the long white hair of wisdom. Visually, *DOGOD* is a mixture of what the artist as a boy imagined God's appearance to be and what he was taught in Catholic school, a combination that is as frightening as it is mesmerizing.

Local artist Martin Kersels offers an economical but effective evocation of the deity in the form of a crudely carved wooden ear. Slightly larger than actual size, *Devotional (Lynyrd Skynyrd #6—What's Your Name)* (2002) is painted an eerie, shimmering blue and placed high on the wall. It seems to eavesdrop on the comments and conversations of passersby and suggests that all our mortal acts are witnessed, or in this case overheard, by some all-knowing force to whom we are accountable and by whom we are judged.





HEAVENLY VISIONS: (from top) Catherine Opie, 'They See God, I See Hate,' 1984; Victoria Reynolds, 'For the Carnal in Dante's Hell,' 1999

No show on the Almighty would be complete without the Reverend Ethan Acres, whose own father was a fire-and-brimstone Southern Baptist minister. Here, depicted in a huge duoprint on Mylar, Acres crouches in awe and supplication while a larger-than-life nude figure of Christ, his back scourged, rises into the sky on a crucifix of light that radiates from his outstretched limbs. The image is charged with a tent revivalist's sense of spectacle, complete with bolts of digital lightning. Acres frequently uses heated evangelical rhetoric to describe his work—"Beat down the devil, my lambs, and help me put the FUN back in FUNDAMENTALISM!"—and miraculously, he is able to imbue both his art and his remarks about it with an urgency and a humor that resist the temptations of easy irony.

In an effort to make sense of the wide-ranging work, the curators have divided the 100 artists into 16 categories, which include "Artists See God as Architect," "...as Love," "...as Extraordinary Force of Nature," "...as Tyrant," "...as Mother," et cetera. A few classifications overlap: "Artists See God Everywhere," "...See God Take Many Forms," "...See God as Ineffable."

The categories attempt to cover too many theological bases, and the problem with this is illustrated by two artists in the show who have, by coincidence, based their contributions on an object in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art: *God*. Made in 1917, *God* is a loop of cast-iron plumbing protruding from a miter box, the result of a collaboration between artists Morton Schamberg and Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. One of America's first works of dadaist art, *God* is still fresh in its effrontery. Artist T. Kelly Mason updates the original with opaque plastic pipe and a blue miter box, while Lillian Ball's larger-scale homage adds light, causing the clear plastic pipe to emit an otherworldly glow. Ball's is the richer of the two pieces, but a viewer may wonder why she appears in the "Artists See God Everywhere" section as opposed to the "Artists See God as Light" section, and why Mason's version fits into "God as the Great Organizer" as opposed to "Artists See God Everywhere."

To fully succeed, the show's art, and organizing principles, would have to have been more consistently focused on some strong belief or point of view. In the end, I was reminded of a passage from George Eliot's *Middlemarch*:

"What is *your* religion?" said Dorothea. "I mean—not what you know about religion, but the belief that helps you most?"

"To love what is good and beautiful when I see it," said Will. "But I am a rebel, I don't feel bound, as you do, to submit to what I don't like." **LA**

FROM TOP: COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST/COURTESY REGEN PROJECTS, L.A. & LAGUNA ART MUSEUM; COLLECTION OF THE ARTIST/COURTESY LAGUNA ART MUSEUM

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ARCHITECTURE

Gothic Arch

A mysterious new building Luis Buñuel would've loved

by Greg Goldin

SOME BUILDINGS make you wonder. Consider the four-story brick-and-concrete schoolhouse that was completed recently on Pico near Doheny. The building is a Gothic marvel, a tour de force of molded gables, quatrefoils, and leaded-glass windows. The brickwork—a textured, dappled exterior of umber and beige and black—is eye-catching, delicious. Looking at the western facade, you are tempted to count each brick, so mesmerizing is the effect of all those little rectangles piled insurmountably high. The mason got that massive wall just right by laying in soldier courses, rows of vertical bricks that demarcate each floor and bring excitement to the horizontal uniformity. Speeding past on Pico, you acknowledge a triumph of ... pseudo 14th-century architecture.

Staring at the four stories of retro mortuary, you start guessing at who's inside. You half expect John Waters to answer the door, dressed in a satin robe with a tasseled rope sash, inviting you in to see his collection of filigreed codpieces and hand-coined chain mail. Or maybe this is the new headquarters for the Museum of Jurassic Technology, a building so randomly out of place, like London Bridge crashing into the middle of a man-made lagoon in Lake Havasu City, Arizona, that you begin to think a wicked prankster is testing your credulity.

The truth will have you really questioning your retinal register. The $15 million, 47,000-square-foot structure is a girls' school built by Chabad-Lubavitch, the messianic branch of Judaism. The only reason the *shule* looks like a Plantagenet abbey is because the group's world headquarters, in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, happens to have a Gothic facade. The "original" building, at 770 Eastern Parkway, is a 1934 apartment house purchased in the 1940s to be used as a synagogue for a fledgling band of Hassidic Jews. It is a sham of copycat architecture, since Gothic Revival, which came along in the 18th century, was dead by the late 19th. In the 1930s, the style was nothing more than a patina, a way of adhering a recognizable set of gewgaws to a formulaic structure, papering a conventional building with nifty historical references.



CHUTZPAH: The Kraines Family Early Childhood Center at Pico Boulevard and Doheny Drive; the leaded-glass windows (inset)

The Kraines Family Early Childhood Center on Pico is a tribute to the late Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, whom some Lubavitchers believe is a modern messiah. Because 770 is perceived as hallowed ground, L.A.'s chief rabbi, Chaim Cunin, of Chabad Telethon fame, insisted that a copy be struck true to its inspiration, from architraves to transoms to lintels. Even the images in the leaded-glass windows had to be correct, down to obtaining permission from the original glassmaker to reproduce his design. And so Elizabethan galleons—blustery four-masters riding high on a sea of amber- and blue-colored glass—sail from window to window, coursing jauntily and imbuing the offices and classrooms with a buttery light.

Rabbi Cunin is like a painter who painstakingly and perfectly renders the same exquisite canvas again and again and again. (This is his second rendition of 770; the first was completed in Westwood 23 years ago.) He can paint an original, yet he only makes flawless copies. He has found his ideal of beauty, and he intends to preserve it by replicating it. Is he inspired or is he myopic?

Whatever he is, you've still got to admire Cunin's chutzpah. In homage to the pure happenstance of Rabbi Schneerson washing up in Brooklyn, Cunin has gone to enormous lengths, and spent handsome sums, to scrupulously build in a style that evokes the glories of Christ and the infallibility of the Catholic Church in Rome. Then he installs a Jewish girls' school within its brick walls. Luis Buñuel could have yanked hard on the dark humor of the juxtaposition.

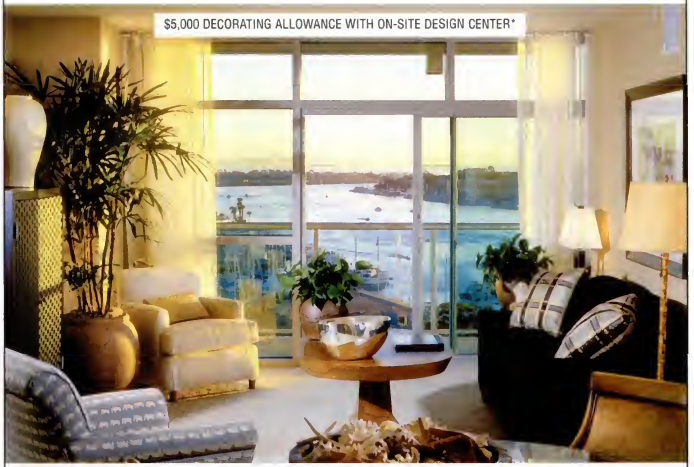
Had those Lubavitchers in the 1940s been able to afford Manhattan real estate, the Kraines schoolhouse might have been art deco, with a sensuous, feminine motif embossed on a frieze. Had they bought property elsewhere in Brooklyn—maybe Park Slope, near the Botanic Gardens—Los Angeles might have acquired a row of brownstones, with stoops quarried from Connecticut sandstone. As it is, what they got, and what we now have, is a doppelgänger of doppelgänger architecture: Gothic Revival revived. **LA**

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When there is something wrong with the way the brain works, it is called dementia. Dementia itself is not a disease. It is a group of symptoms that may include memory loss, confusion, and changes in behavior. Memory loss that gets in the way of daily life is NOT a normal part of getting older. Therefore, it is important to see a doctor about these symptoms.

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- Being confused about time and place
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- Problems with abstract thinking and learning new things
- Putting things in unusual places and forgetting how they got there
- Drastic changes in mood and personality
- Losing interest in hobbies or being with other people

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Advocacy
Public policy activities to encourage legislative reform to improve Alzheimer's and dementia care and increase funding for research



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The Importance of Support Groups

by Peter Braun, Executive Director
Alzheimer's Association, Los Angeles

Taking on the role of caregiver to a loved one suffering from Alzheimer's disease can be devastating. Daily stress, financial worry, and the constantly changing needs of your loved one combine to tax your emotional and physical strength. Even with the support of family and friends, it is not unusual for a caretaker to feel isolated and alone. Spending an hour in a support group surrounded by others who are having a similar experience can help you feel more connected and cared for.

Support groups provide a safe and comfortable setting in which to share experiences, ask questions, and seek compassion. Though the members of a support group may share nothing else, they share the bond of caring for a person suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

The Alzheimer's Association of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside offers close to 150 support groups in the tri-county area. Last year, more than 2,000 caregivers met in hospitals, church basements, care facilities, and community centers and shared their experience. There are general meetings and more specific meetings such as those for the Spouse or the Adult Child. Meetings conducted in Japanese, Spanish, Mandarin, Armenian, and Korean as well as English assured that the multicultural needs of this vast region would be met. No matter what language you speak, no matter where you grew up, it is possible to find a peer, a friend, a shoulder to lean on.

As caregiver Jeff Asher, eloquently put it, "The support group experience engenders loving kindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy, and it teaches one the most difficult lessons of all, that of handling with equanimity the acceptance of things you cannot change."

For a complete list of support groups, log on to www.alz.org or call (800) 660-1993.



"I think it is a powerful message that the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation and the Alzheimer's Association have joined forces to support the needs of those newly diagnosed and their caregivers. Families need help, especially giving children a way to make sense of this confusing and frightening disease. That's why I wrote my book, What's Happening to Grandpa?. I'm proud to stand alongside my friend Leeza and her team as they offer help and hope."
- Maria Shriver

Q&A with Maria Shriver

Maria Shriver is one of those rare individuals whose gift to her family and the world has always seemed obvious; she cares. She is simply a person of great personal convictions, tremendous optimism, and the charm and brains to make the impossible seem within reach. When her father, Sargent Shriver, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, Maria acted every bit the part of his daughter...she got into action and wrote a beautiful book from a child's point of view about the subject. Below are a few thoughts she recently shared:

Q: What do you think is the scariest for kids?
A: I think the scariest part for kids is the "unknown." When no one is talking to a kid, a kid's imagination can take hold and he or she will imagine all kinds of different things that might be going on. I think it's always really important to sit down and, depending on the age of the child, try to walk the child through what's going on in your family, whether it is cancer, whether it's a disability of some sort, whether it is Parkinson's, diabetes, Alzheimer's. The more you can explain to a child what's going on, how you feel about it so that they aren't afraid and that they feel they can talk to you about something like that, the better off the family is.

Q: What has changed about your relationship with your father?
A: Really nothing has changed. The best part about my father, of course, is his optimism and his heart. So, I still try to talk to him the same way. I try to treat him the same way, and I try to talk to him about things he did for me and with me. I tell him about how people come up and talk to me all the time about him and his role in America, how they have worked for him in the Peace Corps and how their lives were changed by Headstart or Job Corps. So, I try to do a lot of talking to him about what people are saying about him. I hope it makes him feel good, and if it's just for the moment, that's great. I feel that's some way of perhaps how I play a role in his life today.

Q: Now that Alzheimer's disease has entered your lives, how do you attack it and what suggestions do you have for families?
A: I think every family situation is unique, and I would never want to judge how any one family handles this disease or how any one person in the family handles the disease. One thing I have learned is that you have to accept the person for who they are today. You have to accept the caregiver's judgement. As the child, often times you are not living there day in and day out, and I have to have respect for my mother and how she's handling it...which I think is extraordinary. Certain ones of my siblings who live near my parents do more work than I do since I'm 3,000 miles away, so I try to help in other ways, and I think everybody tries to balance it in the best way they can. I've spoken to a lot of children of people who have Alzheimer's, and they say that they really struggled over the notion, Should they keep their loved one in their home, should they put him or her into a home? and that they felt people would judge them as bad children or bad spouses if they put that person in a home. And I think one of the things we can talk about is that we should not judge other people. People do the best they can. Everybody has different economic situations and different emotional situations, and we have to support people and support the decisions they make with their loved ones.


Photo: Heine Barbara, Pasadena

A Foundation Created from Personal Experience

by James Huysman, Executive Director, The Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation

I have known Leeza Gibbons for many years. I have been a guest of her talk show and have seen her interview people in a crisis or a very vulnerable time in life. I worked for her and brought aftercare to her program to provide free medical and psychological treatment for guests. But it wasn't until her mother got Alzheimer's, as she herself was going through crisis and a vulnerable time in life, that I got to know the real Leeza. In response to her pain, we developed The Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation in 2002. As Executive Director, I see firsthand, everyday, Leeza's undying nationwide commitment to educating, energizing, and empowering caregivers and those recently diagnosed with memory disorders. She is the driving force behind the energy and mission of our foundation's signature program, Leeza's Place.

Like all others, she did not choose this cause. It chose her. Once that occurred, Leeza and the entire Gibbons family agreed to open the door to the world as they embarked upon their challenging journey. The first purpose was to reduce the shame and stigma of Alzheimer's and other memory disorders. Leeza and the Gibbons family have stepped out in a highly public way to promote early intervention, care, comfort, and community nationwide.

Developed in response to the challenges Leeza and her family encountered while seeking specific and needed support, Leeza's Place is a potent source of information, strength, and purpose. Nestled within your own community, Leeza's Place is a multifaceted reprieve, for both caregivers and the recently diagnosed, that integrates educational programs, connective social activities, emotional support, and intergenerational programming designed to help you navigate through your community's continuum of care. Leeza's Place was designed to ensure that others experiencing what the Gibbons family encountered would have access to new, supportive settings created for the purpose of educating, empowering, and energizing.

The cornerstone of each Leeza's Place is a specially trained "Leeza Care Advocate" whose primary responsibility is to guide caregivers and their loved ones through the emotionally charged maze of memory disorders: educationally, supportively, and confidently. There is nothing ordinary about Leeza's Place – everything done there is designed to induce a more positive outcome for those whose lives have been turned upside down. Each Leeza's Place has been carefully crafted to empower both the caregiver and the recently diagnosed by offering services that create self-esteem, relieve symptoms, impart knowledge, reduce stress, promote inclusion, and ultimately improve the quality of life while helping guests to acquire advocacy, coping, and care-related skills.

At Leeza's Place, visitors can participate in Leeza's Memory Television (LMTV), a unique and empowering program that allows an entire family, irrespective of ages, to preserve memories forever by creating their own family productions.

All of the programs at Leeza's Place are the direct result of listening to and understanding the unique needs, values, pressures, and goals of caregivers and their loved ones. Programs have been designed to provide educational and empowering strategies that are not currently available. Although services may vary from site to site, each Leeza's Place locale will provide programs that offer support on three levels - emotional, educational, and social - for caregivers, families, and their recently diagnosed loved ones.

We encourage you to contact us in either joining in the support of a Leeza's Place in your area or assisting us in creating one in your community. You can find out how to join us at www.leezasplace.org.



The Family Guide to Alzheimer's Disease™

An indispensable resource offering encouragement and instruction to those affected by Alzheimer's Disease.

Hosted by Leeza Gibbons, this 5-volume series was created to help families understand what to expect; deal effectively with the challenge of this disease; help their loved ones meet each day more successfully; and enhance the quality of life for all involved.

For more information or to purchase, visit www.leezasplace.org.

The Alzheimer's Association Wishes to Thank Our Friends in the Entertainment Industry

For the past 12 years, the Alzheimer's Association in Los Angeles has presented its premier charity event, "A Night at Sardi's," to highlight our battle against Alzheimer's disease by honoring corporate and entertainment industry leaders, philanthropists, advocates, and family caregivers for their commitment. The evening brings Broadway to Beverly Hills, saluting such classic shows as Guys and Dolls, My Fair Lady, Hair and Grease, featuring cast members from hit TV shows like Frasier and Will and Grace as well as Broadway stars Jason Alexander, Peter Gallagher and Victor Garber. The evening is chaired by Laurie Burrows Grad, whose father, Broadway legend Abe Burrows, suffered from Alzheimer's disease. Under Laurie's leadership, the event has raised more than $10 million for research and caregiver's support. We have honored those who have given voice to our cause, individuals such as Leeza Gibbons, Shelley Fabares, David Hyde Pierce, Mike Myers, Jeanne Phillips a.k.a. "Dear Abby," Victor Garber, and others, all of whom have been personally touched by Alzheimer's.

The entertainment industry has played its role in giving exposure to this "thief of the mind," a phrase first coined by Mike Farrell. It is becoming more and more evident that as the baby boomer generation ages, nearly every family is touched by this disease. When a former president announces that he has Alzheimer's and when Hollywood celebrities add their voices to the chorus of millions of Americans affected, then our work at the Alzheimer Association is stronger for it.

Working closely with members of the Hollywood community, the Alzheimer's Association has been involved in bringing the subject of Alzheimer's disease front and center in both film and television. It is important that Hollywood deal with this vital and important issue and that films conveying Alzheimer's be as authentic as possible, assuring their significant power to both move and educate audiences. Over the years we have recognized and honored television shows and films that have brought Alzheimer's disease to the light and we have brought our expertise to many of them. This list includes television movies such as the Emmy award winning *Door to Door, Road to Galveston, Do you Remember Love?, There Were Times, Dear;* the recently aired on KCET the PBS documentary, *The Forgetting;* episodes of *The West Wing, Law & Order, Without a Trace, The Practice, Beverly Hills 90210, Sisters, Picket Fences, Touched by An Angel,* and films such as *Iris* and *The Notebook.*

Please join us at the Alzheimer's Association this coming year at events to raise funds to support both care and cure, help and hope, and public awareness:

Los Angeles Memory Walk
October 2, 2004 at Hollywood Park
With Lea Thompson, Shelley Fabares, William H. Macy, Leeza Gibbons, Steve Edwards, Bryan Cranston, Sharon Lawrence, Victor Garber, Ken Howard and others

Celebrity Golf Tournament
Hosted by Peter Gallagher
November 1, 2004 at Wilshire Country Club

Night at Sardi's
March 9, 2005 at the Beverly Hilton

For more information, call (800) 660-1993
Or contact us at www.alzla.org



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Leeza Gibbons, winner of the Alzheimer's Association Advocacy Award at the 2002 "A Night at Sardi's.

The Importance of Early Diagnosis

Memory loss that interferes with daily life is not a sign of aging. Forgetting the names of friends or family members, losing the ability to do simple arithmetic or consistently having a hard time finding the right words can be early signs of Alzheimer's disease.

An early diagnosis can rule out other causes of dementia such as vascular dementia or dementia due to vitamin deficiency or depression. Knowing the exact nature of the dementia ---will assist medical professionals in deciding upon the most beneficial course of treatment and might prevent the use of costly medical procedures. If the diagnosis is Alzheimer's, there are numerous medical options that can potentially improve thinking and behavior.

Early diagnosis of the disease helps the person with dementia and the family plan for the future. In the early stages of Alzheimer's, a patient can still make important decisions about finances, legal issues, and care options.

If you suspect that you or a loved one may be suffering from Alzheimer's disease, don't delay; seek immediate help from a medical professional.

From Victim to Advocate: Facing Alzheimer's Disease

by Leeza Gibbons, Founder & Board Chair, The Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation

"Your mother has Alzheimer's."

NO matter how prepared you think you are, it is an assault…almost like a stalker who had you in his sights and suddenly pounces, rewriting your life's story. It was so much easier in the protective space of denial. The lies you tell yourself can be comforting for a moment, but not for long. My mother had stared this down long before I was even ready to peek around the corner. She was the one who gathered us around and said, "Something is wrong. I've paid the electric bill three times."

Her mother, my granny, had already surrendered to the same thief that was stealing my mother's memories. In those early days and months every night when I put my head on the pillow, I thought of her at the moment when she closed her eyes. She knew. She knew what was coming, that she would slowly disappear. The kind of courage it takes just to face another day with that knowledge is amazing to me. Mom told us, "When I can no longer call you by name and I kick and scream and fight you, know that is the disease talking- not me." It happened just as she said it would, but the forewarning didn't make it hurt any less.

"You're a storyteller, honey. Take my story and make it count," Mom told me in the early stages of her disease. I believe she knew that setting me on a course of action would be the best way for me to cope. Just as Ronald Reagan wanted to shield his Nancy from the pain of watching him deteriorate, Mom too wanted to protect us from her death in slow motion, but her descent into darkness IS part of her story. So with her direction and my family's blessing, I honor her by preserving what was once my mom as well as the mysterious life force that now resides in her body.

In the telling of my story, I have been blessed to meet many families with great grace and bravery. Our efforts at Leeza's Place to help those newly diagnosed and their caregivers give me a rare glimpse into the family dynamics after the bomb called Alzheimer's disease has exploded and they are gathering for the fight. I was recently reminded of my mother's courage when we opened our doors at the Health First Leeza's Place in Melbourne. A woman named Evelyn Glover was there with her children and grandchildren. I knew before meeting her that she had the disease. Her demeanor was just a little bit tentative. Her laughter just a bit nervous. Mostly, though, it was her spirit that called out to me. Mom had been the same way. Aching to escape the trap, people in the early stages seem to try so hard to mask it all, to appear as if nothing is wrong— desperate to make YOU feel at ease.

The Glovers are a well-known family in these parts. A big name in the oil business, Evelyn has served as the driving force in the business since her husband died, leaving her to handle the company and young children. She had not missed a day of work in 30 years when "something started going wrong."

On this particular day, Evelyn looked as if she could be going to the office.

Dressed smartly with the look of proud intelligence on her face. Money, education, status — it makes no difference with this disease. Alzheimer's is an insatiable invader…it wants not only the "victim" but also the entire family.

It had been barely over a week since the Glovers had heard the news about MaMoo, as she was called. Her son called it "the thing she has." She called it Alzheimer's. She seemed to want to face it. In fact, she was driving down I-95 with her daughter Beth when she said, "It's time." For three years the family had been dealing with their mother's decline while Evelyn maintained her independence. They had been shuttled from doctor to doctor, trying all kinds of drugs and treatments, some of which made the situation worse. Beth spoke of the frustration she had of not being able to handle the needs of her own family and her mother. All the while, they hoped it was just a condition that would pass… something they could fix and get their mom back.





From Victim to Advocate: Facing Alzheimer's Disease (cont'd)

Frustrated and frightened, they found Dr. Rosemary Laird and she brought them to Leeza's Place, an oasis where they would find support. Dr. Laird is a driving force behind our efforts in Florida and she told me, "They are an amazing family. I don't know how much they are ready to face yet." So you must understand that when I stood before a packed room on our opening day, it was with some risk that I asked Evelyn to come forward and address the crowd, "There is someone here with her family today who really personifies what we are about at Leeza's Place. Evelyn, where are you?" There was a silence as she made her way through the crowd and I stood there holding a live mic praying I had made the right move. She started to speak and it was immediately clear - Evelyn Glover, a working woman for three decades, had found her work for the next stage of her life.



I hugged her; she took the mic and said: "To stand here and look at this audience, I think about how lucky we are. When you get to be my age, which is 85 (applause)...when you get here and you have, well I didn't know what it was for a long time, but something was going wrong up here, and I found out that I had, uh, how do you pronounce it…"
Leeza: "Alzheimer's?"
Evelyn: "Well, something like that. So I stayed home for a while and I felt sorry for myself and oh dear, look at me now. I want to help people in this situation. All these nice people seem to understand me and I wouldn't take anything for it. I want to be there to help somebody like me."

Bingo. There it was. Evelyn was looking through a new lens. She went from victim to advocate. The woman who was all about work ethic had found a new community to serve. She felt safe and protected. I whispered a prayer of thanks.

Evelyn's family all gathered around her in the room where we do what we call Memory Television. A "set" designed by families featuring pictures, mementos, and souvenirs provides the background for the production of a video scrapbook. Family members interview each other about the things they never quite got around to. The Glovers pulled out old photographs and old feelings they hadn't taken out in a long time.

We heard about Joe going over to his mother's house everyday to read scripture because Evelyn couldn't understand what the words meant anymore. We heard Beth say she wished they had a video like this with their dad. Laughing, teasing, recalling old days at "the big house." A legacy preserved before memories are kidnapped.

When it was over, the big brother, Joe, said, "I believe there's a lot of healing here." Even though they were exhausted, they said they felt energized. Education, empowerment, energy. That's the mission of Leeza's Place. It was my mother's wish, and to see it fulfilled through the experiences of families like the Glovers makes my heart leap.

The Glovers gave me a bouquet of peacock feathers to celebrate the opening of Leeza's Place. Proud, colorful, standing tall - they are there amidst the computers, the kids' art, the scrapbooking table, and the love that lives in that community. One family's experience in our common disease.



"Leeza Gibbons is beautiful inside and out, one of the few true profound human beings in a business filled with shallowness. I'm deeply moved by Leeza's efforts to offer help and hope to those millions of families who battle Alzheimer's. To lose your memory is the cruelest blow. I'm proud she chose this rendition of the song, and I hope it will nourish the souls of both caregivers and the diagnosed."
- Barry Manilow

On September 14, Top Sail Productions and Leeza Gibbons will release a special CD

Reflections

to raise funds for the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation and the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. Top Sail Productions is donating 100% of its profits from the sale of this CD. *Reflections* is a collection of 15 incredible songs from the biggest names in music today, including Anita Baker, Celine Dion, Linda Eder, Enya, Gloria Estefan, Aretha Franklin, Josh Groban, Carole King, Madonna, Barry Manilow, Reba McEntire, Richard Marx, Sarah McLachlan, Leann Rimes and Rod Stewart. Top Sail Productions has partnered with Warner Special Products and WEA Distribution to release *Reflections*.

Alzheimer's Story Lines turn in 'Memorable' Performances

By Dan Weaver and Lee Moore Jr.

What's one of the best weapons we have in arming us against Alzheimer's? In the last decade, several television series and movies of the week have zoomed in and focused on this real-life villain.

Jan Landis, a TV Guide Channel Executive, has previewed hundreds of socially relevant episodes and says, "By putting a human face on such difficult topics, TV has the power to move us into action."

"The West Wing handled this issue so nicely," offers Leeza Gibbons. "Allison Janney experiences every authentic emotion when her TV father enters the early stage… powerful. On ER, Alan Alda is so well loved; his portrayal of a first-stage patient is poignant." In fact, both those episodes were honored with an Alzheimer's Association Entertainment Award.

The Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation and the Alzheimer's Association are both regularly tapped for story line consulting. Peter Braun, executive director, Alzheimer's Association, L.A. believes, "The Hollywood community has the power and authority to raise awareness and effect change."

Former Entertainment Tonight Managing Editor Glenn Meehan, who now heads Marble Faun Entertainment, agrees. He lost two grandparents to Alzheimer's and saw firsthand how it "robs families of loving moments. TV is one of the most powerful tools that we can use to make a difference." His fall shows in production include American Families for Discovery.

Ed Boyd, E! Entertainment Producer and Writer commented, "I'd like to see more social causes like Alzheimer's addressed in unexpected ways - integrated into genres like comedies and reality. It's a good idea to not always make the social cause the central focus of a program - to have the story line intersect with the main story in a new way."

Look for Lifetime TV to do more socially charged themes as well. "We are committed to being advocates for women, and we recognize that Alzheimer's disease is an issue that our viewers care about," says network president Carole Black. "We applaud Leeza and her team at the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation for their passionate work, and we will continue to be involved in making a difference in the lives of caregivers and those who suffer from memory disorders."

Landis suggests that TV programmers have an obligation to script social issues. "Dramas can play a valuable role in creating awareness on topics like Alzheimer's, which most of us don't want to think about, let alone talk about. Our TV sets can be the icebreakers." The Peabody- and Emmy-winning host Bill Moyers adds, "People give us something they will never get back, an hour or two of their time. We owe them something of value."

Gibbons, a TV and radio entertainment news magazine veteran, has reported on countless segments promoting socially redeeming dramas and summarizes, "TV and movies can be the ammunition in our arsenal to battle this crisis. I'm so thankful that my industry has proven time and again that it will be there to answer the call."

Television Series & Movies with Alzheimer's Story Lines

SERIES

The West Wing (NBC)
ER (NBC)
The Practice (ABC)
Strong Medicine (Lifetime)
Any Day Now (Lifetime)
Judging Amy (CBS)
Without a Trace (CBS)
Touched by an Angel (CBS)
7th Heaven (WB)

MOVIES

Do You Remember Love? (1985)
Do You Remember Me? (1995)
Road to Galveston (1996)
Forget Me Never (1999)
Safe House (2000)
Time to Say Goodbye (2002)
Alzheimer's: My Mom, Our Journey (2002)
A Time to Remember (Hallmark 2004)
The Notebook (2004)

10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease

1. Memory loss. One common early sign of dementia is forgetting recently learned information. While it is normal to forget appointments, names, or telephone numbers, those with dementia will forget such things more often and not remember them later.

2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks. Persons with dementia can find it hard to complete everyday tasks. A person with Alzheimer's may not know the steps for preparing a meal, using a household appliance, or participating in a lifelong hobby.

3. Problems with language. A person with Alzheimer's often forgets simple words or substitutes unusual words, making speech or writing hard to understand.

4. Disorientation to time and place. A person with Alzheimer's can become lost on their own street, forget where they are, how they got there, and not know how to get back home.

5. Poor or decreased judgment. Those with Alzheimer's may dress without regard to the weather. Individuals with dementia often show poor judgment about money, giving away large amounts of money or paying for repairs they don't need.

6. Problems with abstract thinking. Someone with Alzheimer's could forget completely what numbers are and what needs to be done with them.

7. Misplacing things. A person with Alzheimer's may put things in unusual places: an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.

8. Changes in mood or behavior. Someone with Alzheimer's can show rapid mood swings—from calm to tears to anger—for no apparent reason.

9. Changes in personality. People's personalities change somewhat with age, but a person with Alzheimer's can change a lot, becoming extremely confused, suspicious, fearful, or dependent on a family member.

10. Loss of initiative. The person with Alzheimer's may become very passive, sitting in front of the television for hours, sleeping more than usual, or not wanting to do usual activities.









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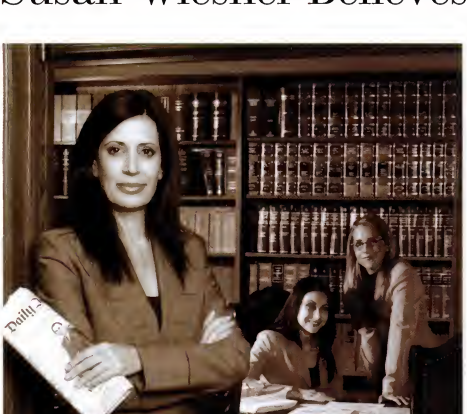
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BEST CHOICE IN LAW PRACTICE: FAMILY LAW BY KRISTIN WITZENBURG

Susan Wiesner Believes in Making



(Left to right) Susan Wiesner, Jessica Lesowitz, and Allyson Rinella

Marriage is perhaps the only contract one enters into without reading it first. It changes from state to state, meaning you can "enter" the contract in one state, move to another state and suddenly be held accountable to a new contract, all without being given a copy of either to read.

The complexities of family law stem not only from widespread limited knowledge about all the implications of the marriage contract, but also from the evolving landscape of the nuances of relationships as well as family law.

"Many people only become acutely aware of family law when they are facing a divorce, and at that moment they become filled with fear and trepidation of the unknown," says Susan Wiesner, founder of Susan E. Wiesner, A Law Corporation. "If there are children involved, the biggest fear people have is losing custody. Secondarily people are concerned with losing all of their financial security. Combined with the emotional trauma of a failed relationship, it can be quite overwhelming for most people."

Wiesner Law Corporation

Wiesner's firm specializes in family law, divorce, child custody, child support, spousal support, premarital agreements, paternity and palimony. An expansive knowledge of the law and beyond provides a high level of service to clients, and includes expertise in "Professional Goodwill" litigation (often associated with highly skilled or trained professionals or in those fields where reputation and talent are critical); experience with issues related to tax law, asset valuation, business law, compensation and real estate; and a worldly understanding of the human experience.

"I am proud that our practice has reached so many different kinds of families – celebrities and high income families, those suffering from one or both spouse's drug addiction, two moms in a domestic partnership, and ones plagued by domestic violence or child endangerment," says Allyson Rinella of the firm. "Through our pro bono work we have been able to provide legal aid to low income families as well."

Adds Wiesner, "While we do have celebrity clientele, I believe it is inappropriate to use their names as a marketing tool."

First Resolve Crisis

Wiesner credits much of their success to a line of defense that works quickly to first resolve crisis. Assuring clients that the law generally provides for an equitable solution, the attorneys at Wiesner Law Corporation are quick to take proactive steps that often calm the legal matters as well—such as getting a client immediately into rehabilitation if they are struggling with a drug or alcohol problem; or by communicating quickly with opposing counsel to find solutions so as to avoid litigation. "A healthy co-parenting agreement is a first priority," says Jessica R. Lesowitz, also of the firm. "Highly contentious lawsuits can carry over for a long time, which is of particular concern when children are involved."

Wiesner often says, "We don't live by the sword, but we're not going to die by it either," meaning they approach each case with an eye towards settlement, but will not forfeit a tough line of defense when necessary to defend clients' rights.

Worldly Yet Grounded

Wiesner believes her background and interest in international affairs, her personal choices in life to be a single mother, her experience with her own divorce, and her fortunate study with mentors such as Sorrell Trope of the high profile family law firm Trope & Trope have all led her to find an intellectual, emotional and spiritual pinnacle through her client work. Her global outlook is seen in her education, her background and experience, her volunteer work, her family life, and her personal and professional goals. She adopted her daughter, Jane, from China after

a Difference

learning about the abandoned girls resulting from the "one-child" policy. She earned her law degree at Creighton University and then enrolled in the London School of Economics and Political Science to earn her Masters in Law. She is a member of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, and keeps grounded by focusing on the reward of helping people.

"She's an extremely effective lawyer, not only in negotiating her client's interest, but in the courtroom as well. Even beyond that, she is caring and compassionate to her clients, and instills in them a true sense of self and confidence," says Sorrell Trope. The 1998 Harriett

> "Many people only become acutely aware of family law when they are facing a divorce, and at that moment become filled with fear and trepidation of the unknown."

Buhai Center for Family Law Zephyr Ramsey Honoree for his commitment to justice for all people, Sorrell Trope may have influenced her involvement in the Center – but she has made her own place there today. She recently taught a class for the Center on the basic aspects of Family Law designed to instruct volunteers on how to help the Center's low-income clients. As part of the Center's pro bono panel, the Wiesner Law Corporation also takes on a pro bono client every year on behalf of the organization.

"Susan is the perfect representation of Harriett Buhai and the Center for Family Law. When we turn to our pro bono panel, it is because of a difficult, thorny case. Susan's family law expertise as well as her commitment are what make her so valuable to us," says Betty L. Nordwind, Executive Director of the Harriett Buhai Center. "When an attorney like Susan applies her professional expertise and knowledge freely to a challenging legal situation, it is extraordinary."

The Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law is a co-sponsored family law/domestic violence project of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles, and Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles. Named after Harriett Buhai – a woman characterized by activism on behalf of the causes of "…the least vocal, the least powerful, the wounded sparrows of the world…she gave it away free, without reward except that which comes inwardly to a person of values who does right in disregard of popular opinion and public appeal," says Superior Judge Isabel R. Cohen. Harriett was on the frontline of women lawyers representing women without fee. Sorrell Trope and other friends fondly recall Harriett for her capacity for friendship…a rare ability to hear what people are really saying and to accept them as they are. A woman with whom, beneath an ordinary appearance, lay a soul of unusual warmth, exuding love and affection, whose lightness despite the intensity of her beliefs, courage, and accomplishments of things beyond herself left us all better off.

Why People Get Divorced

Wiesner believes that there are several trends to watch in the field of family law. She notes that the large amount of current publicity on the issue of gay marriage highlights the legal implications of the marriage contract generally. While more and more gay couples work to create their own relationship contracts, so do heterosexual couples in the form of co-habitation and pre-marital agreements. "Enough people have seen a good friend or family member struggle through a nasty and devastating divorce, or know of someone who loses a beloved partner only to be shut out of their home and rightful place in bereavement. The stigma of establishing your contract up front is going away," says Wiesner.

With all the divorce and suffering that must surely be witnessed by anyone in the family law field, Wiesner is surprisingly upbeat about it. "Often times what we think is the worst thing


Susan and Janie Wiesner

turns out to be the best thing – a new beginning, an opening for new love, a resurrection of your lost self or esteem. So many of our clients believe that the expenence has changed their lives for the better after they're through the fire of it all. Of course much of that change came from within, but it is very satisfying to play such a critical role in people's lives and try to help them find the right path."

When asked to describe the most common event leading to divorce, Wiesner says, "You might think – especially in 'tinsel town' – that it's betrayal or infidelity or lying. But it's not. The most common theme is a gradual decline of communication, leading to separate lives, and to one day waking up and not knowing whom you're married to anymore."

Her advice? "Take your family seriously today. Talk about your relationship, take the time to understand your 'contract' and make the effort to establish your values today."

Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law
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310-470-2265

GLOBE VENICE
VENICE
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
310-392-8720

THE GRILL ON HOLLYWOOD
HOLLYWOOD
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
323-856-5530

HAL'S BAR & GRILL
VENICE
(L)(D) MON-FRI
310-396-3105

I CUGINI
SANTA MONICA
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
310-451-4595

IL MORO RESTAURANT AND CAFE
LOS ANGELES
(D) EVERY DAY
310-575-3530

JIMMY'S TAVERN
LOS ANGELES
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
310-446-8808

JIRAFFE
SANTA MONICA
(D) MON-FRI
310-917-6671

LA VECCHIA CUCINA
SANTA MONICA
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
310-399-7979

LE DOME
WEST HOLLYWOOD
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
310-659-8911

LILLY'S RESTAURANT
VENICE
(D) MON-FRI
310-314-0004

THE LOBSTER
SANTA MONICA
(L) MON-FRI
310-458-9294

LOCANDA DEL LAGO
SANTA MONICA
(D) EVERY DAY
310-451-3525

LUCQUES RESTAURANT
LOS ANGELES
(L) EVERY DAY
323-655-6277

MADRES RESTAURANT
PASADENA
(L)(D) TUES-FRI
626-744-0900

MAX RESTAURANT
SHERMAN OAKS
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
818-784-2915

MICHAEL'S RESTAURANT
SANTA MONICA
(L) MON-FRI
310-451-0843

MICHI
MANHATTAN BEACH
(D) EVERY DAY
310-376-0613

NAPA VALLEY GRILLE
LOS ANGELES
(L) MON-FRI
310-824-3322

NORMAN'S ON SUNSET
WEST HOLLYWOOD
(L)(D) MON-FRI
310-657-2400

PALOMINO RESTAURANT
WESTWOOD
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
310-208-1960

PASTINA TRATTORIA
LOS ANGELES
(L)(D) TUES-SUN
310-441-4855

PREGO RISTORANTE
BEVERLY HILLS
(L)(D) MON-FRI
310-277-7346

ROCKENWAGNER
SANTA MONICA
(D) EVERY DAY
310-399-8504

VALENTINO
SANTA MONICA
(D) MON-FRI
310-829-4313

VERT A BRASSERIE
BY WOLFGANG PUCK
LOS ANGELES
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
323-491-1300

VINCENTI RISTORANTE
LOS ANGELES
(D) EVERY DAY
310-207-0127

VITO RESTAURANT
SANTA MONICA
(L)(D) EVERY DAY
310-450-4999

XIOMARA RESTAURANT
PASADENA
(L)(D) MON-FRI
626-796-2520

ZAX RESTAURANT
BRENTWOOD
(L)(D) MON-FRI
310-571-3800

ZAZOU
REDONDO BEACH
(D) SAT-SUN
310-540-4884

PROGRAM AVAILABILITY
(L) = LUNCH
(D) = DINNER

[1]Tax and gratuity excluded.
[2]Nestlé Waters North America will donate $1 to Share our Strength for each restaurant meal served at participating restaurants during the period August 16, 2004 to August 29, 2004, up to a maximum donation of $10,000.
[3]Los Angeles Coalition to End Hunger & Homelessness (lacehh.org)

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

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NEW TO THE GUIDE

Page 172 KENDALL'S BRASSERIE ★ Page 176 CAPPAS & MATADORS ★ Page 188 BEACON ★ Page 191 PICCOLO CIPRIANI

DINING

EDITED BY MARGOT DOUGHERTY



TOP PICK

BLOWFISH SUSHI

Julian Lennon is one of the owners of this sushi-*anime*-nightclub combo imported from San Francisco. Flat screens galore flicker with cartoons, and on weekends the back room often booms with a techno-pop DJ. The lunch crowd comes from nearby offices, but at dinner it's the young and screamingly hip sipping on sake cocktails. The food stands up to the hype, thanks to dynamite sushi chefs and impressive presentation. *9229 W. Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood (310-887-3848). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly. Full bar. ($$$) Sushi*

PHOTOGRAPH BY EDMUND BARR

DOWNTOWN & MID CITY

ABC SEAFOOD *205 Ord St. (213-680-2887). B-L-D daily.* At this bustling, Hong Kong–style seafood house, huge tanks of squirming edibles ring the dining room, and on weekends hungry acolytes come in waves for dim sum. Expect lots of chaos and a kitchen that doesn't know from not using MSG. Beer and wine. ($) Cantonese

CAFE PINOT *700 W. 5th St. (213-239-6500 or www.patinagroup.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* This Joachim Splichal spot is situated in a glass box next to the Central Library. The food is Splichal lite—eccentrically delicious Provençal-California cooking. Full bar. ($$$) California/French Bistro

CIAO TRATTORIA *815 W. 7th St. (213-624-2244 or www.ciaotrattoria.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Smack in the middle of the Financial District, with pastoral murals and busts of David, this is a great place for dining those out-of-town clients. Skip the *bruschetta*, don't miss the lobster ravioli, and peruse the excellent wine list. Crème brûlée cheesecake for dessert. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

CICADA *617 S. Olive St. (213-488-9488 or www.cicadarestaurant.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* The room is a throwback to old-time elegance, and the food mixes traditional and contemporary: beef carpaccio with truffle cheese, lobster crepe with asparagus, duck ravioli with shiitake mushrooms, filet mignon with foie gras. Banana Basket for dessert. Full bar. ($$$) Northern Italian

CIUDAD *Union Bank Plaza, 445 S. Figueroa St. (213-486-5171 or www.ciudad-la.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The tortilla soup at Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger's downtown place is a star. Follow with Argentine empanadas, Swiss chard with tomatillo sauce, or Brazilian *moqueca*—mussels, shrimp, and other seafood in a coconut-lime broth over coconut rice. Shuttle service to nearby theaters is available. Full bar. ($$$) Latin

GUELAGUETZA *3337 1/2 W. 8th St. (213-427-0601). L-D daily.* It's no wonder that this little restaurant, with its handbag-sized empanadas, banana leaf–wrapped tamales, and divine moles, is so crowded. But don't let that thwart you; the food is well worth the effort. Also at 3014 W. Olympic Blvd. (213-427-0608). No alcohol. ($) Oaxacan

NEW **KENDALL'S BRASSERIE** *Music Center, 135 N. Grand Ave. (213-972-7322). L-D daily.* The Patina family's newest member has carved out an elaborate space underneath the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Dark wood, red velvet curtains, leather couches, and eclectic paintings smack of a European salon, yet the service gets you to the opera on time. The crowd is diverse, some ordering the $99 Plateau Royal (whole Maine lobster, Dungeness crab, shrimp, assorted oysters, and mussels), others happy with the Wednesday special of potato soup with crème fraîche and fried leek. You'll even have time for the chocolate and vanilla *pots de crème*. Full bar. ($$$) French

LA BOCA DEL CONGA ROOM *5364 Wilshire Blvd. (323-938-1696 or www.congaroom.com). D Thur.–Sat.* Comprising two whimsical rooms that lead to the Conga proper, the Boca seems straight out of Dr. Seuss—with the exception of the scantily clad crowd. The food is festive: tuna ceviche, *cazuela de carne* (grilled rib eye over mashed tamale), and a *tres leches* chocolate cake. Work it all off with a salsa lesson at the Conga. Full bar. ($$$) Nuevo Latino

L.A. PRIME *Westin Bonaventure Hotel, 404 S. Figueroa St. (213-612-4743). D nightly.* Things have gotten very simple and very good on the 35th floor of the Bonaventure, with cherrystone clams, crabmeat cocktails, and prime beef with lobster tail. Full bar. ($$$$) Steak House

LA SERENATA DE GARIBALDI *1842 E. 1st St. (323-265-2887 or www.laserenatadeonline.com). B Sat.–Sun.; L-D daily.* This large storefront in the heart of Boyle Heights attracts a steady stream of gringos for a unique, tasty menu that focuses on Mexican seafood. Beer and wine. ($$) Mexican

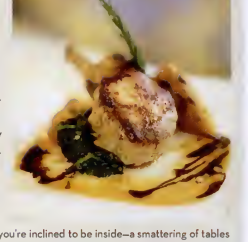
NICK & STEF'S STEAKHOUSE *Wells Fargo Building, 330 S. Hope St. (213-680-0330 or www.patinagroup.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* At Joachim Splichal's steak house, giant cuts of beef hang in a glass-walled aging chamber, and the service in the moderne dining room is flawless. Meats are cooked perfectly; the artichoke gratin is richly indulgent, and the lemon meringue pie is a perfect coda. Full bar. ($$$$) Steak House

NOÉ RESTAURANT & BAR *Omni Los Angeles Hotel, 251 S. Olive St. (213-356-4100 or www.omnihotels.com). D nightly.* British chef Robert Gadsby is wowing crowds with his Asian-inspired presentations—especially his six- and nine-course tasting menus. Signature dishes include a butternut squash cappuccino starter, mimosa salad with crispy chicken and minted mango frappé, and halibut with periwinkle chowder. There are lovely desserts (banana tempura, anyone?) and cheeses, too. Full bar. ($$$) Progressive American

PATINA *Walt Disney Concert Hall, 141 S. Grand Ave. (213-972-3331 or www.patinagroup.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Joachim Splichal's restaurant at Disney Hall is a stunner. Imagine chestnut soup with truffled cream, pheasant with apple-champagne sauerkraut, sautéed blue prawns with creamy polenta, caramelized apples with a crescent of *linzer* dough and ice cream. This is a

UPDATE

Traxx



PORK'S UP: A chop with spinach and polenta

It's a romantic collaboration, restaurants and railroad stations. Grand Central Station has the Oyster Bar, a lovers' oasis, and not just because of its aphrodisiacs on the half shell. Union Station in L.A. has Traxx. Atmospherically we have an advantage—an outside dining area. Traxx's patio is bordered by giant jacaranda trees on one side and a grassy courtyard on another. The sounds of waiters pouring water, birds fussing, and gates being announced merge into a convivial white noise. Whether you're inclined to be inside—a smattering of tables sit smack on the concourse; an intimate dining room sits in view of an open kitchen—or out, the station's graceful stone arches and restored tiles, its inlaid floors and vaulted ceilings, evoke the glow of a bygone grandeur. It doesn't take much to conjure images of ladies in fox-collared suits and seamed hosiery on the arms of well-fed oil magnates walking down the platform to board steam engines en route to a summer house in Santa Barbara or a hotel in New Orleans. This fits the menu of chef-owner Tara Thomas. She gives a nod to those days with the likes of a Waldorf salad but coaxes the '50s favorite by substituting frisée for the iceberg and, when in season, pears for the apples. The walnuts are candied, and Pt. Reyes Blue subs for the mayo.

Thomas's cuisine has a homestyle base. Fish, chicken, and meats are perfectly cooked and simply presented. But each dish gets a personal signature, a tweak that's ingenious yet subtle, no louder than the difference between a solid and a jacquard. Louisiana lump crab cakes are huge discs whose crunchy exteriors give way to moist, delicate meat. They get their kick from a remoulade laced with chipotle chiles. A beautiful striped bass is accompanied by caramelized fennel, and the line-caught freshness of one plays off the aromatic nuance of the other. A beef tenderloin is thick, remarkably tender, and correctly cooked to order. It's such a good piece of meat that carving becomes reverential; should it be consumed, really, or bronzed? A drizzle of merlot-and-tarragon glaze with a just balance of richness, acidity, and herbal notes perks up the beef without pummeling it, and a cloud of mashed potatoes and fried waffle chips are like chaperons, helping all the flavors play nice. At lunchtime Traxx is filled with office workers fueling up on giant salads and upscale sandwiches (chicken with watercress and Brie; grilled Black Forest ham and smoked gouda). At night it's quieter, with families celebrating birthdays and reunions, friends seeing someone off on a trip. Fox collars are scarce, but passengers are still climbing aboard at Union Station, and they're still going to Santa Barbara or New Orleans. Or to Universal City and North Hollywood on the Red Line. *Plus ça change…* —*Morgot Dougherty*

800 N. Alameda Street (213-625-1999 or www.traxxrestaurant.com). Full bar. ($$–$$$) L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat. Contemporary American

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PETE'S CAFÉ AND BAR *400 S. Main St. (213-617-1000). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun.* Envision red ceilings, low lights, jazz music, and alcoholic egg creams. It's upscale pub food here: mac and cheese with Vermont cheddar, Asiago, and chèvre; barbecued lamb ribs; braised veal potpie; and for dessert, homemade bread pudding. Full bar. ($$) American Bistro

THE RESTAURANT *Downtown Standard, 550 S. Flower St. (213-892-8080 or www.standardhotel.com). B-L-D daily.* It's mellow yellow in this mod, '60s-style hotel diner where the food is all about comfort: *croque monsieur*, roast pork with caramelized apples. Dessert? *Mochi* ball ice cream. At night a DJ spins in the lobby. Full bar. ($$$) International

R-23 *923 E. 2nd St. (213-687-7178 or www.r23.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* One of the best sushi bars in L.A. is hidden in this artsy district and sports cardboard furniture, exposed brick, and chefs who make miracles out of fish and rice. Beer, wine, and sake. ($$$) Japanese

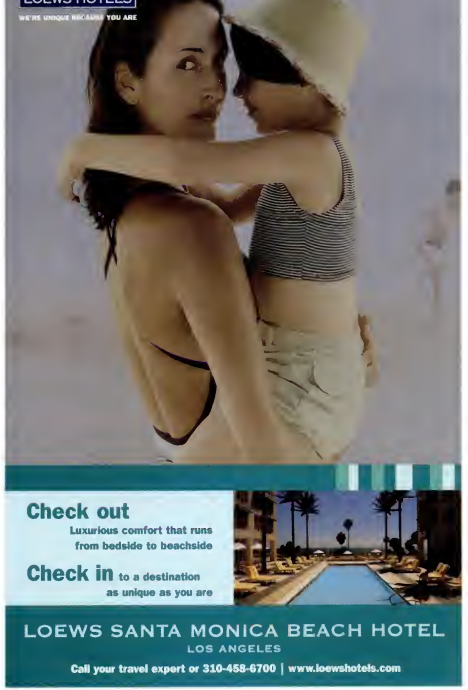
SAI SAI *Millennium Biltmore Hotel, 506 S. Olive St. (213-624-1100 or www.millenniumhotels.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* After a greeting from a kimonoed hostess, you're seated and the show begins: an exquisite four-course chef's menu, starting with sweet and smoky miso eggplant and ending with crème brûlée. The sashimi is lovely, as are the more involved *kaiseki* dinners, and the staff makes you feel like you've been coming for years. Beer, wine, and sake. ($$$) Japanese

TESORO TRATTORIA *300 S. Grand Ave. (213-680-0000 or www.tesorotrattoria.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* This unassuming slice of classic Italian dining is within walking distance of MOCA. The room is charming, and the kitchen serves some of the tastiest *gamberetti* (risotto with shrimp) and grilled portobellos this side of Florence. Complimentary shuttle to and from the Music Center. Full bar. ($$$) Tuscan

A THOUSAND CRANES *New Otani Hotel, 120 S. Los Angeles St. (213-253-9255). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sun.* Outside is an elaborate garden with a waterfall. Inside, waitresses in kimonos shuffle among tables serving a mostly Japanese clientele everything from teriyaki chicken and sashimi to grilled eel, pickled jellyfish, and raw squid. Full bar. ($$$) Japanese

WATER GRILL *544 S. Grand Ave. (213-891-0900 or www.kingsseafood.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The room is sophisticated if somewhat businesslike, but chef Michael Cimarusti's food is why you're here. Choices include top-notch oysters and an exquisite menu of fresh fish. The wine list is first-rate, as is the chocolate bread pudding. Full bar. ($$$) Seafood

ZUCCA *801 Tower, 801 S. Figueroa St. (213-614-7800 or www.patinagroup.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly* Joachim Splichal imported the floor from a Tuscan farmhouse and the handblown chandeliers from Venice for this rustic Italian outpost. Look no further for *pizzetta* strewn with caramelized onions, goat cheese, and ham; Ligurian-style pasta with green beans, potatoes, and pesto; or succulent striped bass cooked in a wood-burning oven. Full bar. ($$$) Italian



LOS FELIZ & SILVER LAKE

BLAIR'S *2903 Rowena Ave. (323-660-1882 or www.blairsrestaurant.com). D nightly.* The rooms—one a bar, one a dining room—are small and word's caught on so it's crowded, but the result is conviviality rather than annoyance. Nobody's pushing bottled water, the beer selection includes Chimay ales, and dishes range from shrimp cocktail with deviled eggs to Tasmanian salmon with pea tendrils and dill-*chimichurri* sauce. Yum. Full bar. ($$$) California

CAFE STELLA *3932 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-666-0265). D Tue.–Sat.* At this neighborhood café, specials are on a chalkboard, fresh baguettes are whisked to the tables, and everyone seems engaged in serious conversation over the likes of asparagus salad, escargots, tarragon chicken, and steak *au poivre*. Save room for the crème brûlée. Beer and wine. ($$$) French

EDENDALE GRILL *2838 Rowena Ave. (323-666-2000 or www.edendalegrill.com). D nightly.* There's a speakeasy vibe to this old firehouse turned restaurant. Eat inside or out, or just liquidate yourself at the 38-foot bar. Good choices include crab cakes with tequila-lime sauce, baked sea scallops, molasses-glazed salmon, and seared trout with applewood-smoked bacon. Full bar. ($$$) American

THESE LISTINGS are a guide to establishments reviewed and recommended by our dining critics and staff and have no relationship to any advertising in Los Angeles magazine. Visits are anonymous, and all expenses are paid by the magazine.

Price classifications are approximate and are based on a typical three-course dinner for one person, exclusive of drinks, tax, and tip; unless otherwise noted, these restaurants accept most credit cards.

Key to Symbols

($) Inexpensive – Dinner under $15
($$) Moderate – Mostly under $25
($$$) Expensive – Mostly under $50
($$$$) Very expensive – $50 and over

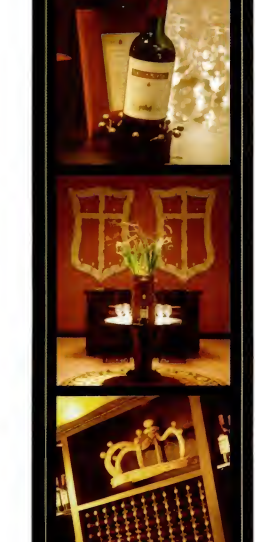
B. Breakfast **L.** Lunch **D.** Dinner

WE WELCOME your comments and suggestions. Please write c/o "Dining Out," Los Angeles magazine, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., 10th floor, Los Angeles, CA 90036; or e-mail us at letters@lamag.com.



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FRED 62 *1850 N. Vermont Ave. (323-667-0062). B-L-D 24 hours daily.* Chef Fred Eric and designer Fred Sutherland created a menu of tweaked diner grub: chewy Korean potato-starch noodles, tofu scramble, smoked salmon sandwiches, even homemade Pop-Tarts. This retro joint is cool 24 hours a day. Beer and wine. ($) Eclectic Diner

IL CAPRICCIO ON VERMONT *1757 N. Vermont Ave. (323-662-5900). L. Sat.–Sun.; D nightly.* The smell of roasting garlic fills the dining room, thanks to a kitchen cooking up chicken Vesuvio, *spaghetti del mare*, and *rigatoni norcina* (sausage, mushrooms, and onions). For dessert? The squash-shaped *zuccotto* (sponge cake). Beer and wine. ($$) Italian

LA BELLE EPOQUE *2128 Hillhurst Ave. (323-669-7640 or www.labelleepoqueresturant.com). B-L-D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* This is like a sidewalk café on the Left Bank—with friendlier waiters. They serve unpretentious French cuisine and a dessert tray that's near impossible to choose from (hint: the cappuccino cup). Country omelettes for breakfast, shrimp-and-avocado club sandwiches for lunch, and *poulet sauce maison* for dinner. Beer and wine. ($$) French/Continental

MEXICO CITY *2121 Hillhurst Ave. (323-661-7227). L. Wed.–Sun.; D nightly.* The decor is '50s Naugahyde, the crowd Los Feliz hipster, and the menu atypical. The spinach enchilada—with a Zacatecanas sauce of *poblano* chiles, sour cream, and onions—best shows off the kitchen's ability. Carnivores will like the *cochinita pibil* (Yucatán-style marinated pork). Full bar. ($) Mexican

UPDATE **TANGIER** *2138 Hillhurst Ave. (323-666-8666 or www.tangierrestaurant.net). D nightly.* This dimly lit locale with a cabaret in back is lousy with celebrities, expats, and Los Feliz hipsters. The lounge hosts a DJ and occasional readings. In the Moroccan carpet-covered dining room, innovative appetizers include a sautéed feta cube with grilled tomatoes and red lentil soup with chili oil. For entrées, it's lime-ginger shrimp with cilantro mashed potatoes, or chicken curry, or an herb-crusted filet mignon. The house dessert is Cheesecake Tangier. Full bar. ($$$) Eclectic

TANTRA *3705 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-663-8268). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Think neo-hip Indian overseen by a golden Ganesh. The dining area is open to the street, and the food is superior—curries, *masalas*, stir-frys, and a fine *raita*. An adjacent lounge looks like Jeannie's bottle might on an acid trip and serves Tantrinis and Indian Sunsets. *Namaste*. Full bar. ($$) Indian

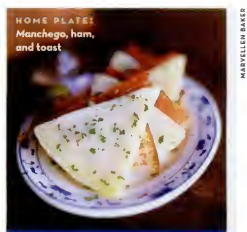
VERMONT *1714 N. Vermont Ave. (323-661-6163 or www.vermontrestaurantonline.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The place is elegant and buzzing with regulars, the owners are in the house, and the food falls in the well-prepared standard-bearers category: poached salmon, beef fillet, roast chicken. A shrimp and arugula salad has a citrus zip, and the flourless chocolate cake is waiting patiently. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-French

HOLLYWOOD & MELROSE

AGO *8478 Melrose Ave. (323-655-6333). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* At this sleek showcase (co-owned by Robert De Niro), pastas are served piping hot and perfectly cooked and pizzas come direct from a brick oven. Entrées include the likes of monkfish with creamy polenta and baby rack of lamb. Full bar. ($$$) Tuscan

ALESSI *6602 Melrose Ave. (323-935-1197). D Tue.–Sat.* The cuisine is neither fussy nor heavy at this neighborhood bolte, just superbly executed. Linguine is al dente, prosciutto pizza has a pastry-thin crust, and osso buco is so tender you can toss your knife. Full bar. ($$) Italian

ALEX *6703 Melrose Ave. (323-931-5233 or www.alexrestaurant.com). D Mon.–Sat.* Chef-owner Alex Scrimgeour's fine dining restaurant is beautiful, and the menu is filled with knee-weakening choices: osetra caviar, duck breast with black cherry reduction, pear *tarte* with gingerbread ice cream. This is the place to celebrate—or simply indulge. Full bar. ($$$) Contemporary European



MARVELLEN BAKER

NEW

Cobras & Matadors

Oh, Mr. Arroyo. You've done it again. The owner of Cobras & Matadors on Beverly and Cobra Lily on Wilshire has turned his steak place (the Hillmont) into another C&M, this one with a beer and wine license. Look for the same tasty tapas: beet and *cabrales* salad, octopus with *salsa verde*, prawns with cinnamon sugar and chiles, and a good selection of cheese plates. Don't stop at dessert. It's not a meal without churros and hot chocolate dipping sauce. *4655 Hollywood Blvd. (323-669-3922). D nightly. Beer and wine. ($$) Tapas*

AMALFI *143 N. La Brea Ave. (323-938-2504 or www.amalfiristorante.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Francesco Grillo fronts the house, his father Filippo is in the kitchen, Frank's on the stereo, artichokes are in the fusilli, and the flavor of Italy's in every dish. From risotto to whitefish, fennel salad to tiramisu, this is the real deal. Eat inside or out and head upstairs to the Acme Comedy Theater for stand-up or music afterward. Full bar. ($$) Italian

ANMO *119 N. Highland Ave. (323-871-2666 or www.anmocafe.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* The highly regarded catering company's tiny café sports exposed pipes and paper lanterns and dishes up everything from ten-grain pancakes to turkey burgers, tuna *tartare* to lasagna, grilled chicken to chocolate mousse layer cake. Beer and wine. ($$) American

ASTRA WEST *Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave. (310-652-3003 or www.charliepalmer.com). L. Mon.–Fri.* Whether you're outfitting your manse or just ogling, there's no need to drop when you shop at the PDC. This Charlie Palmer restaurant on the third floor has creative food at reasonable prices and a huge outdoor area that's swell for parties. Free valet parking to boot. Full bar. ($$) California-Continental

BASTIDE *8475 Melrose Pl. (323-651-5990). D Tue.–Sat.* Chef Ludo Lefebvre, who made a name for himself in the States at L'Orangerie, recently replaced Alain Giraud at this bastion of high-end Frenchness. While the menu will change—owner Joe Pytka wanted to crank it up a notch—you can count on the olive tree–shaded

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courtyard, Andrée Putman interiors, serious service, and all-French wine list. Full bar. ($$$$) Provençal

CAFE DES ARTISTES *1534 N. McCadden Pl. (323-469-7300 or www.cafedesartistes.info). L. Mon.–Fri; D nightly.* A garden with fountains and a tree-draped terrace surround this bistro where the fireplace is always lit. The must-have item is the *confit de canard* served with green cabbage and sautéed apples—that is, if you're able to eat anything after devouring the jumbo shrimp cocktail. Full bar. ($$$) French

CAMPANILE *624 S. La Brea Ave. (323-938-1447 or www.campanilerestaurant.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* Mark Peel and Nancy Silverton's standard-bearer has been on the top tier of L.A.'s restaurant hierarchy since day one. The menu presents seasonal ingredients at their best and brightest, which might mean cedar-smoked trout with fennel salad, rosemary-charred lamb with artichokes, or sour cherry brioche. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-Mediterranean

CANTER'S *419 N. Fairfax Ave. (323-651-2030). B-L-D 24 hours daily.* Perhaps the rude st deli this side of Houston Street, with waitresses who have seen it all—many times. The too-hip-for-words crowd shows up late for blintzes and abuse. Nate 'n Al has more class, but Canter's has more soul. Full bar. ($) Deli

CHEBBO *7533 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-850-7070). B-L-D daily.* Orange walls, multicolored glass windows, candles, and a cup of crayons on your white-papered table. Noisy inside and outside at the sidewalk picnic tables while waiters bustle about carrying plates of brisket and mashed potatoes or rectangular slabs of pizza, still bubbling, on wooden boards. The music is funky, and the chocolate soufflé is worth the 20-minute wait. Beer and wine. ($$) Eclectic Italian

DOLCE *8284 Melrose Ave. (323-852-7174 or www.dolce-enoteca.com). D nightly.* The Dodd Mitchell interior is the biggest statement at this haunt for the PYT set—black leather chairs and table covers, a bar backlit by a wall of flames, and a second open-air dining area. Think Linq: The Next Generation. The food, ostensibly Italian, takes a backseat to the scene. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

DOUG ARANGO'S *8836 Melrose Ave. (310-278-3684). D Mon.–Sat.* Oodles of thick candles are scattered around a big room with an enormous stone fireplace, and it doesn't ever seem to get noisy even when full. The menu is comfy: shepherd's pie, Lake Superior whitefish, liver and onions, broccoli and brown rice with tofu. Full bar. ($$$) California

FALCON *7213 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-850-5330). D nightly.* The atmosphere is Asia moderne, with a large patio off the dining room and a busy lounge area grounded by shag carpeting. The service is friendly and the food so-so, but beer salad with goat cheese and pressed chicken with grits are good bets. Full bar. ($$$) California

LUCQUES *8474 Melrose Ave. (323-655-6277 or www.lucques.com). L. Tue.–Sat.; D nightly.* Highlights at Suzanne Goin's foodie mecca include braised beef short ribs with potato puree, greens, and horseradish cream and a prix fixe menu that features the chef's specialties (Devil's Chicken) and changes weekly. Full bar. ($$$) French-Mediterranean

LUNA PARK *672 S. La Brea Ave. (323-934-2110 or www.lunaparkla.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun.* A bar lines one wall, booths take up another, and simple tables fill the middle. Soups, salads, and comfort foods—goat cheese fondue, Monte Cristo sandwiches (at lunch), pork cutlets—are the draw. So are s'mores—with homemade graham crackers. Full bar. ($$) American

MINIBAR *3413 Cahuenga Blvd. West (323-882-6965 or www.minibarlounge.com). L. Wed.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* It's Stanley Kubrick meets Willy Wonka—all chocolate browns, aquas, and white leatherette. Small plates include yucca flour biscuits flavored with smoky Gouda, saffron risotto, duck egg rolls, and beet salad. Desserts are even more mod: *café con leche* (chilled coffee-caramel pudding) and a marshmallow stew (two tiny bowls of homemade marshmallows and a teapot full of thick chocolate). Sandwiches and salads at lunch. Full bar. ($$) Small Plates

MORTONS *8764 Melrose Ave. (310-276-5205). L. Mon.–Fri; D Mon.–Sat.* The discerning diner can spy a sprinkling of big names fueling up on the likes of overstuffed shrimp quesadillas, crab cakes, filet mignon with seared spinach, and pork chops with horseradish polenta. They'll close the deal with a hot fudge sundae. Full bar. ($$$$) American

MUSSO & FRANK GRILL *6667 Hollywood Blvd. (323-467-7788). B-L-D Tue.–Sat.* The oldest restaurant in Hollywood remains a dark, imposing landmark serving flannel cakes in the morning, short ribs at night, and the martini against which all others must be judged. The waiters are gruff, experienced, and perfect. Pure Raymond Chandler. Full bar. ($$$) Continental

NISHIMURA *8684 Melrose Ave. (310-659-4770). L. Mon.–Fri; D Mon.–Sat.* Sushi chef Hiro Nishimura allows the food to provide the splash in his minimalist cube across from the PDC. Warm, coarsely salted *edamame*, thinly sliced *hamachi* sashimi with serrano chile and garlic-citrus sauce, abalone sautéed with shiitakes and asparagus, and peppered tuna sashimi exemplify his exquisite work. Beer, wine, and sake. ($$$$) Japanese

OFF VINE *6263 Leland Way (323-962-1900 or www.off-vine.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun.* Good prices, good food, great ambience. This patch of calm in the dark heart of Hollywood is stocked with imaginative California cuisine: blackened turkey breast with jalapeño-cranberry relish, grilled pork chops with apple-lime salsa, pecan chicken with pear-rosemary sauce, and a variety of pasta dishes. Beer and wine. ($$) California

PACÉ *2100 Laurel Canyon Blvd. (323-654-8383). D nightly.* If you're up for clever pizzas (chopped clams, homemade sausage), pastas, grilled rib eye, sautéed chicken breast, or a knockout salmon fillet on a cedar plank, this one's for you. For dessert try the cookies and berries. Beer and wine. ($$) Italian

MARVELLEN BAKER

OBJECT OF DESIRE

With a Twist

These days Frank Gehry is best known for the stainless steel swoops and curves of Disney Hall. But have you seen what the guy does with glass? Wyborowa *(vee-BRO-va)* Single Estate vodka, made in Gehry's ancestral Poland, comes in an elegant bottle of his design. The award-winning spirit is of the rye variety, quadruple distilled and ridiculously smooth. The bottle's deep-seated cap doubles as a shot glass—handy in the wild—and its lines lose their distortion once you've imbibed sufficiently. *—M.D.*



PALADAR *1658 Wilcox Ave. (323-467-7500). L.Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The pork chop here is grilled, an inch and a half thick, and served with garlic-laced *boniato* mashed and quince-mango chutney. Wash it down with the best *mojito* you've had since Castro took power and dance it off at Nacional next door. Full bar. ($$$) Cuban

THE PIG *612 N. La Brea Ave. (323-935-1116 or www.thepigcatering.com). L–D daily.* The late-night crowd is inevitable as the lines at Pink's. Among the must-haves: brisket (an applewood-smoked hunk in a sweet mustard sauce), hickory-smoked baby back ribs, Cajun crusted Mississippi catfish, and Smoky Mountain gumbo with jalapeño corn bread. Dessert? Karo pecan pie. BYOB. ($$) Barbecue

PINK'S *709 N. La Brea Ave. (323-931-4223 or www.pinkshollywood.com). B–L–D daily.* At this homage to the wiener, fanatics shovel in footlong jalapeño dogs with iridescent chili. There's always a crowd waiting for redhot nirvana served, steaming, for pennies. No alcohol. No credit cards. ($) American

PINOT HOLLYWOOD *1444 N. Gower St. (323-461-8800 or www.patinagroup.com). L.Mon.–Fri.; D.Mon.–Sat.* This Joachim Splichal outpost has a pun-filled menu and serious food and wine. Try the crab-and-risotto cake, bacon-wrapped steak with mushroom masheds, or veal short ribs with pumpkin ravioli. Nice walled-in patio, too. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-French

SANTO COYOTE *9010 Melrose Ave. (310-860-9330). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Here's a nicely decked-out Mexican spot with rancho ambience and fairly predictable fare: nachos, quesadillas, tacos, salads. The lounge is a good place to meet for a margarita after a spree on Robertson. Full bar. ($$) Mexican

SONORA CAFE *180 S. La Brea Ave. (323-857-1800 or www.sonoracafe.com). L.Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* This upscale cousin of the venerable El Cholo serves Southwestern cuisine for meat lovers and shellfish-ionados. Try the South Texas antelope, cowboy steak, smoked pork chop, or when in season, abalone. Full bar. ($$) Southwestern

SUNSET BOOM *1450 N. Cahuenga Blvd. (323-465-9004 or www.thesunsetroom.com). D Wed.–Sat.* This is something of a nightclub setting, with various music and dance acts to accentuate your dining pleasure. On weekends, when there's dancing in the lounge, request a booth. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-French/Asian

TABLE 8 *7661 Melrose Ave. (323-782-8258). D nightly.* Chef Govind Armstrong is turning out spirited, imaginative, delicious food. The menu changes daily, but Kobe flatiron steak with pea tendrils and torpedo onion marmalade gives you an idea of his ethos. So does king salmon with charred escarole, artichokes, and cracked green olives. Beautiful room, lovely bar, good service. What's not to like? Full bar. ($$$) California

THAILAND PLAZA *5321 Hollywood Blvd. (323-993-9000). L–D daily.* This is a madcap romp featuring an assortment of food stands arranged around a plaza and Thai rock bands (don't miss Thai Elvis) onstage all night long. Menus tend to overlap, and the *mee krob* from one place may be better than that from another. The overall experience is an alternative reality. Full bar. ($) Thai

TOMMY TANG'S *7313 Melrose Ave. (323-937-5733 or www.tommytangs.com). L–D Tue.–Sun.* Welcome to the dining room of L.A.'s best-known name in Thai cooking (eat his food, buy his sauces, read his book). He really does do wonders with the tastes of his homeland, adding touches from Asia and California as well. Beer and wine. ($$) Thai

VERT *Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd. (323-491-1300 or www.wolfgangpuck.com). L–D daily.* The open-kitchen decor at Wolfgang Puck's place is smart; warmer than the surrounding mall, easier to navigate, and lit just right. The menu's on the hearty side, with snails *persillade* (garlic and butter sauce), fritto misto, gnocchi with Gorgonzola, short ribs, pork chops, and steaks. Full bar. ($$$) Brasserie

WHITE LOTUS *1743 N. Cahuenga Blvd. (323-463-0060 or www.whitelotusbollywood.com). D Tue.–Sat.* There's a trendy crowd, velvet ropes, VIP areas, and an adjoining club. The sushi bar has 50 kinds of sake, and the room gets louder as it gets later—most diners consider 10 p.m. an early reservation. Dishes of note: duck leg confit with soba and sesame-crusted halibut with coconut and Kaffir lime sticky rice. Full bar. ($$$) Euro-Asian

XIOMARA ON MELROSE *6101 Melrose Ave. (323-461-0601 or www.xiomararestaurant.com). L–D daily.* This offshoot of Xiomara Ardolina's Pasadena favorite is equally handsome: wrought-iron accents, brocade chairs, candles dotting the walls, and enormous windows facing Melrose, and it's got her famous *mojitos*, too. The food's as cool as the decor: "very Cuban black bean soup," a spicy lamb shank that comes in a crust-sealed cast-iron casserole and is served with mashed *malanga*, and tasty seafood stews. For dessert, order the chocolate soufflé 45 minutes ahead, or be impatient and go for the enormous *isla flotante*. Full bar. ($$$) Latin

YAMASHIRO *1999 N. Sycamore Ave. (323-466-5125 or www.yamashirorestaurant.com). D nightly.* This is the place to take out-of-towners for a drink and dazzle them with the lights of Hollywood. Sushi, sashimi, and tempura are on tap along with fusion entries like lobster-mango martinis, spicy Asian pasta, and pear-Parmesan chicken. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-Asian

LA CIENEGA & WEST HOLLYWOOD

ALTO PALATO *755 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-657-9271 or www.alto-palato.com). D Tue.–Sun.* Favorites from up and down the Boot are served at this modern space. Come for the *cozze alla Napoletana* (mussels with parsley, garlic, and tomatoes), the thin-crust pizza, and a superb monk fish with lemon, capers, and olive oil. The gelato is renowned; the espresso is perfect. Full bar. ($) Italian

ANGELINI OSTERIA *7313 Beverly Blvd. (323-297-0070 or www.angelinioisteria.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.* The place is tiny, the kitchen is open, the room is busy, and everyone raves about the food. The menu's written in a pastiche of Italian (*taglierino con salumi e burrata*) and English (pork chop with red cabbage and apple). A special of polenta, olives, and scallops is divinity on a plate, ditto the sautéed veal liver. Beer and wine. ($$$) Italian

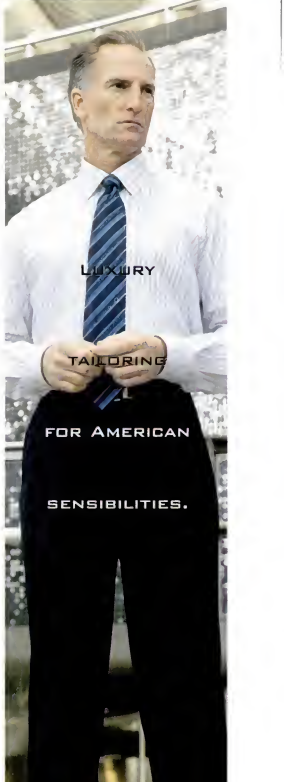
A.O.C. *8022 W. 3rd St. (323-653-6359). D nightly.* Suzanne Goin and Caroline Styne's wine bar and small-plates venture has a festive vibe and glorious food: cheese plates, seasonal salads, fish (seared albacore with tapenade), and meat (lamb skewers with feta *salsa verde*). Scads of good wines by the glass. Beer and wine. ($$) Small Plates

ARNIE MORTON'S OF CHICAGO *435 S. La Cienega Blvd. (310-246-1501 or www.mortons.com). D nightly.* This Windy City offshoot is a classic American steak house, complete with mahogany paneling and waiters who wheel slabs of beef and veal and live lobsters tableside in lieu of menus. The more-than-ample portions are the perfect entrée to cholesterol heaven. Also at 735 S. Figueroa St. (213-553-4566); 3400 W. Olive Ave., Burbank (818-238-0424). Full bar. ($$$) Steak House

ASIA DE CUBA *Mondrian Hotel, 8440 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-848-6000). B-L-D daily.* The restaurant in the beyond-hip Mondrian is filled with hot young celebs working on tuna *pica*, Cuban spiced chicken, and yucca-crusted mahimahi. Don't go home without the Latin Lover: chocolate mousse cake with white coffee anglaise. Full bar. ($$$) Asian/Cuban

BALBOA *Grafton Hotel, 8462 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-650-8383 or www.balboaprime.com). B-L-D daily.* Steak's the name of the game, and the prime cuts, from porterhouse to ostrich, are top of the line, served with your choice of rubs and sauces. Only go for the mac and cheese if you're into heavily smoked Gouda—and don't miss the shoestring fries. Full bar. ($$$$) Steak House

BARFLY *8730 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-360-9490 or www.barflyla.com). D Mon.–Sat.* This spin-off of the Paris nightclub is tucked behind a velvet rope. Inside, assuming you make it, are gilt chairs and mostly model food, like goat cheese salad spiked with toasted nuts. One dessert of note: chocolate whiskey cake. Full bar. ($$$) Continental



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BISTRO 21 *846 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-967-0021). D Tue.–Sat.* Owner Koichiro Kikuchi makes every morsel that leaves his tiny galley kitchen, and his wife oversees a seven-table dining room where patience is a well-rewarded virtue. Velvety soups, sautéed scallops with *edamame* sauce, and black olive–flavored roast duck are beautifully prepared. Beer and wine. ($$$) Cal-French

BUDDHA'S BELLY *7475 Beverly Blvd. (323-931-3588 or www.thebellyband.com). L. Mon.–Sat., D nightly.* The staff is Zen-ly pleasant at this pan-Asian oasis, where chef Hisashi Yoshiara, formerly of Jozu, is at the wok. This is guilt-free cuisine, from potstickers to lettuce cups, *pad thai* to Singapore seafood noodles, wok-tossed mushroom salad to hot sesame buns with lotus-seed-paste fillings. Great for takeout, too. Beer, wine, and sake. ($$) Asian

CHAYA BRASSERIE *8741 Alden Dr. (310-859-8833 or www.thechaya.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* This multiculti bistro is always hopping. The food's unerringly good and incorporates Asian tinges with continental regulars. Think grilled mahimahi with black bean sauce and halibut with lemongrass curry and glass noodles. Nifty cocktails. Full bar. ($$$) Euro-Asian

CHI *Hyatt Hotel, 8401 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-848-3883.) D nightly.* The overall ambience has a dark, sexy, Wild West–meets–Asia feel, thanks to cocoon-shaped chairs, an enclosed patio with a fire pit, and a menu of small plates: potstickers, noodles, grilled beef, honeyed duck breast. The visuals outsmart the victuals, but it's a galactic getaway, and food is served until 11:30 p.m. Full bar. ($$$) Fusion

COBRAS & MATADORS *7615 Beverly Blvd. (323-932-6178). D nightly.* Steve Arroyo's tapas restaurant has been bustling since day one, thanks to the likes of wood oven–roasted mushrooms, *jamón serrano* with lentils, and white anchovies with fried garlic vinaigrette. Browse the extensive Spanish-wine selection next door before heading in. BYOB. ($) Tapas

DAN TANA'S *9071 Santa Monica Blvd. (310-275-9444). D nightly.* This old-fashioned hangout is a favorite among those who live for great steaks and chops, served by waiters who have been around, well, forever. The room is dark, the drinks strong. Celebs who hate to be bothered love the place. The spaghetti sauce is right out of Little Italy. Full bar. ($$$) Northern Italian

DAGHILEV *Wyndham Bel Age Hotel, 1020 N. San Vicente Blvd. (310-854-1111). D Tue.–Sat.* Walk past a harpist to your table, where a waiter sets down chilled shot glasses and decanters of vodka—tea, pepper, lemon, and orange. Time's forgotten here, and maître d' Dimitri Dimitrov oversees all with unerring overseas charm. There's caviar, there's borscht, there are elegant fish and meat dishes, and there is service rarely found in this part of the world. Full bar. ($$$$) French-Russian

EM BISTRO *8256 Beverly Blvd. (323-658-6004). D Mon.–Sat.* Have the homemade potato chips with crème fraiche at the bar, and start with an apple-pear-endive salad with Maytag blue at the table. Entrées range from wild Irish salmon to short ribs with polenta to game hen with couscous. Boston cream cake for dessert. Full bar. ($$$) American Bistro

FAT FISH *646 N. Robertson Blvd. (310-659-3882 or www.fatfishla.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The room is small but arranged spaciously, a bar is secreted in back, and the tiny kitchen turns out great stuff: sushi sweet with freshness, mushroom soup with sesame oil, grilled salmon with long beans, cardamom-roasted duck breast with taro. That kind of thing. Essentially, there's no going wrong. Full bar. ($$–$$$) Asian Bistro

G. GARVINS *8620 W. 3rd St. (323-655-3888). D Mon.–Sat.* The banquettes are a buttery tan suede, the lighting is soft, Sade croons through the speakers, and the menu is small but rich: grilled *satay* of filet mignon, roasted Colorado rack of lamb with baby vegetables, new potatoes in a port wine and pepper sauce. Dessert? Banana mousse cake with warm caramel sauce. Beer and wine. ($$$) California

GRACE *7360 Beverly Blvd. (323-934-4400 or www.grace-restaurant.net). D Tue.–Sun.* Designer Michael Berman redid the old Muse spot with polished-cement floors, cool chandeliers, and an orange-accented color scheme. As we'd expect from chef Neal Fraser, the food's tasty and innovative: sea urchin and pumpkin risotto, Scottish salmon with *brandade*-stuffed peppers, and olive oil–poached halibut. Full bar. ($$$) New American

IL SOLE *8741 W. Sunset Blvd (310-657-1882). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* This is an appealing alternative to the Euro-hip restaurants up the street. The room is small and the food decidedly Italian—no apology for butter, olive oil, salt, or garlic. But it's easy to dine lightly on the likes of a good artichoke salad or broiled fish filleted tableside. Ravioli is superb, stuffed with spinach and ricotta and served in a sage-butter sauce. On the heartier side, a New York strip is nicely charred. For dessert, the tiramisu is an ideal assembly of textures and tastes. Beer and wine. ($$$) Italian

ITA-CHO *7311 Beverly Blvd. (323-938-9009). D Tue.–Sat.* Waitresses are oblivious of the luminaries in the crowd, and there's a menu of sake to sip along with your *tatsuta age*, Japanese-style deep-fried chicken. Sashimi (no sushi) is usually sparkling-fresh tuna or yellowtail with spiked soy sauce. For dessert, it's green tea or red bean ice cream. Beer, wine, and sake. ($$) Japanese

THE IVY *113 N. Robertson Blvd. (310-274-8303). L-D daily; brunch Sat.–Sun.* This is the place to be seen dining, whether on the streetfront patio or inside where it's as cozy as a French farmhouse. The never-changing menu runs from crab cakes and chopped salads to pastas, tandoori chicken, and grilled fish. Full bar. ($$$) American

JAR *8225 Beverly Blvd. (323-655-6566 or www.thejarla.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sun.* Chef Suzanne Tracht is at the helm of this chophouse, where her short ribs and braised pork belly are among the favored dishes. Steaks, chops, fish, and classics like an iceberg wedge and a lobster cocktail anchor the menu, which morphs for a heavenly Sunday brunch. Full bar. ($$$) Steak House

JOSS *9255 Sunset Blvd. (310-276-1886). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Drive too fast and you'll miss this gem where excellent Peking duck is served with a tableside flourish. Regulars also flock here for the multiregional dim sum, apricot spareribs, and Mongolian lamb. Steamed chocolate pudding for dessert. Full bar. ($$$) Haute Chinese

KATANA *8439 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-650-8585 or www.sushiroku.com). D nightly.* From the boys who brought you Balboa and Sushi Roku comes this salute to *robata-yaki*: Everything from yellowtail to chicken gizzard is cooked over an open flame and skewered. Dodd Mitchell's design mixes exposed brick and mortar with the woodsy warmth of a Japanese temple. Watch Sunset from the patio. Full bar. ($$$) Japanese

KOI *730 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-659-9449 or www.koi-restaurant.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The theme is Asian, the scene is hot, and the menu includes sushi, sashimi, and Japanese-influenced entrées. Dishes like seared scallop with yuzu and black cod with miso are tasty, but expect them to be tossed your way by a waiter rushing off to his next gig. Festive party drinks abound. Full bar. ($$$) Japanese

LA BOHÈME *8400 Santa Monica Blvd. (323-848-2360). D nightly.* The decor hits somewhere between a tricked-out bordello and a hunting lodge, and the food is the standard fish and meat dishes with seasonal accompaniments. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-French

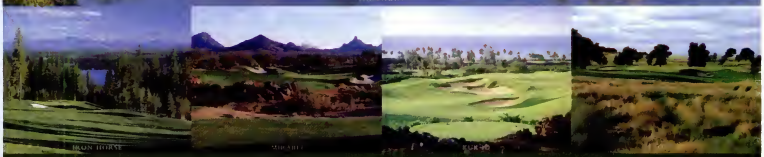
LE DOME *8720 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-659-6919). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* Dodd Mitchell's redesign has Asian elements with log cabin accents. The smoking on the enclosed patio can overwhelm adjacent inside tables, so ask for a spot in back, behind the circular bar, where you can revel in chef Sam Marvin's exquisite cuisine: corn soup with foie gras cubes, perfect halibut with asparagus, pheasant under glass, and, proof of the update, a "vegetarian ecstasy" dish. No question, this kitchen is cooking. Full bar. ($$$$) Continental

LE PETIT BISTRO *631 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-289-9797 or www.lepetitbistro.net). D* nightly. Specialties at this decent, inexpensive bistro include *moules marinières* and herbed chicken with *pommes frites*. Occasionally there's a Moroccan edge, as in the wild mushroom ravioli. Full bar. ($$) French

LINQ *8338 W. 3rd St. (323-655-4555 or www.linq-lounge.com). D nightly.* Dodd Mitchell's design put this place on the map: white walls, marble, glass, and Brancusi-inspired woodwork. A fabulous crowd dines on Moroccan chicken with chutney and Chilean sea bass

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with wasabi masheds. The lemon meringue *semifreddo* is luscious, but most meals end with a martini in the lounge. Full bar. ($$$) Fusion

THE LITTLE DOOR *8164 W. 3rd St. (323-951-1210). D nightly.* The place is such a poorly kept Industry secret that it doesn't even need a sign. The ambitious menu changes every month but may feature Moroccan grilled eggplant and lamb *tajine* with peaches and almonds. Beer and wine. ($$$) French/Mediterranean

LOCANDA VENETA *8638 W. 3rd St. (310-274-1893 or www.locandaveneta.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* This little restaurant across from Cedars-Sinai has Venetian cuisine as good as anything on the Grand Canal. The setting is small and tight; the cooking is hot. Beer and wine. ($$$) Northern Italian

L'ORANGERIE *903 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-652-9770 or www.orangerie.com). D Tue.–Sun.* Owners Gerard and Virginie Ferry are the guardians of this landmark epitomizing extravagant old-world fine dining. Whether it's the signature cracked egg set in a silver cradle and topped with Petrossian caviar, Maine scallops served with their roe, or beef tenderloin with potato soufflé, all that's served here is seriously conceived and supremely executed. The wine list is extraordinary, too. Full bar. ($$$$) French

MATSUHISA *129 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-659-9639 or www.nobumatsuhisa.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* It looks like an ordinary neighborhood sushi bar, but wait till you get to Nobu Matsuhisa's 25-page menu of cooked seafood dishes, including miso-flavored black cod, shrimp in a pepper sauce, and tempura sea urchin in a shiso leaf. Beer, wine, and sake. ($$$) Japanese

MICHELIA *8738 W. 3rd St. (310-276-8288). L. Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* Who else serves filet mignon on a bed of mashed taro? This kitchen unites the flavors of Asia, particularly Vietnam, in delightful compositions. Salmon is marinated in star anise and lemongrass, cilantro prawns are served on grilled tomatoes, snapper comes in a banana leaf. Dessert? Plum wine ice cream. Beer and wine. ($$) Euro-Asian

MIMOSA *8009 Beverly Blvd. (323-655-8895 or www.mimosarestaurant.com). D Tue.–Sat.* This modest storefront bistro resembles an ordinary restaurant in every way but one: The food is really good. A Rolls-Royce crowd dines on now-famous mac and cheese with prosciutto as well as cassoulet, filet mignon, and roast chicken. The house motto: "No truffles, no caviar, no bizarre concoctions!" Beer and wine. ($$$) Country French Bistro

MIRABELLE *8768 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-659-6022). L-D daily; brunch Sat.–Sun.* The friendly bar area is the lunch and evening draw, and the more formal interior features a wine atrium and a raw bar. The menu's more surf than turf, and appetizers shine. Extensive wine list. Full bar. ($$) California

MIX *1114 N. Crescent Heights Blvd. (323-650-4649 or www.mixfresh.com). D Tue.–Sat.; brunch Sun.* The interiors of this oft-reincarnated Craftsman have clean lines and blond wood, and the covered porch manages a lazy Nantucket feel. An assured menu bucks the trend to list every microcooking technique and delivers with elegance: foie gras torchon with apple *gastrique*, chicory salad with pear and chunks of molten Gouda, white bass with fiddlehead ferns, and seafood *cataplana*—a shoal of clams and fish in a spice-licked broth served in a copper pot. Desserts are exquisite. Full bar. ($$$) French–Mediterranean

NORMAN'S *8570 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-657-2400 or www.normans.com). D Mon.–Sat.* You have to be of a certain gastronomic inclination to appreciate fusion chef Norman Van Aken's cuisine. It's not about plain and simple. It's about filet mignon with a poached egg on top, pecan-crusted catfish with collard greens and lemon-bacon-peanut-scallion butter sauce, or yucca-stuffed shrimp with sour orange *mojo*, marinated white cabbage, and *habañero* tartar salsa. If such combos thrill you, the handsome room and nifty low-slung bar will be lovely lagniappes. Full bar. ($$$) New World Cuisine

NORTH *8029 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-654-1313). D nightly.* This a cool watering hole with a mod Alpine feel. Excellent grilled shrimp cocktail and mac and cheese go well with such house specials as the Twig & Berries (Frangelico, Chambord, Bailey's, Absolut, and cream). For serious eating, slip into a banquette and order the porterhouse and caramelized apple tart. Full bar. ($$) Eclectic

ORSO *8706 W. 3rd St. (310-274-7744 or www.orsorestaurant.com). L–D daily.* This place is popular with celebrities who linger on the patio over fine thin-crust pizza and pasta, chicken, and fish. It's noisy, affable, and reasonably priced. Full bar and Italian wine list. ($$) Italian

THE PALM *9001 Santa Monica Blvd. (310-550-8811 or www.thepalm.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* You want steak? This is the place. The walls are covered with celebrity caricatures, the booths are packed, and the waiters talk fast—so keep up. Start with the clams casino and keep going with the double steak (a 36-ounce New York strip for two), which has that misshapen look all great steaks have. Also at 1100 S. Flower St. (213-763-4000). Full bar. ($$$) American

PANE E VINO *8265 Beverly Blvd. (323-651-4600). L Mon.–Sat.; D nightly.* This is a celebrity-intensive café with a rear entrance that allows stars to sneak in for a plate of roasted veggies in a clay pot and some fine risotto. Also at 1482 E. Valley Rd., Montecito (805-969-9274). Full bar. ($$) Italian

PASTIS *8714 Beverly Blvd. (323-655-8822 or www.pastisla.com). D nightly.* Pastis has spruced up its menu and is still like your favorite pair of jeans—comfortable but good-looking, casual but makes you feel like a million francs. Polished cement floors, oodles of throw pillows and candles, patrons and waiters speaking quickly in French, and Edith Piaf trilling in the background. You can't beat the seared foie gras with rhubarb




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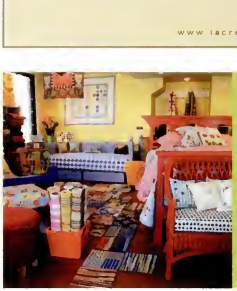
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chutney, the sweet pea soup, or the chicken tagine with Moroccan dates, toasted almonds, and minted couscous. Full bar. ($$$) French

PEARL *665 N. Robertson Blvd. (310-358-9191). D nightly.* The decor is Hollywood sleek, with indoor and outdoor seating, a top-drawer staff, and the best food this location has seen: pan-seared oysters with spinach, prosciutto, and shrimp; deconstructed paella with seafood rimming the plate; a dry-aged New York strip. Tuesday night means "Karaoke from Hell" in the adjacent lounge—you with a pro backup band. Yee-ha. Full bar. ($$$) Contemporary American–Asian

THE PORCH RESTAURANT *House of Blues, 8430 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-848-5123 or www.hob.com). D nightly; Gospel Brunch Sun.* The only juke joint on the Strip that dishes up the blues alongside New Orleans–style seafood gumbo. Try the Louisiana crawfish and shrimp étouffée in brown roux sauce or the Cajun meat loaf with mushroom gravy. The last note? White chocolate banana-bread pudding with crème anglaise. Full bar. ($$$) Eclectic

QUALITY FOOD & BEVERAGE *8030 W. 3rd St. (323-658-5959). B-L daily.* Everything about this place is '50s cool and comfy—the cafeteria look on the inside, the typeface on the menu, and the hearty plates on tap: omelettes, *huevos rancheros*, corned beef hash, and pancakes for breakfast; salads (great dressing), sandwiches, wraps, and burgers for lunch. The sweet potato chips are cooked a second before they're whisked to your table, and the staff is friendly as can be. Outside tables, too. No alcohol. ($) California

THE RESTAURANT *Standard Hotel, 8300 W. Sunset Blvd. (323-822-3131). 24 hours daily.* The music's loud and the waitresses (squeezed into tight diner-style uniforms) young in this pseudo-diner attached to the hip hotel. The menu offers the likes of scampi, roast pork with caramelized apples, and the ultimate french fries. Desserts range from banana splits to *mochi* balls. Full bar. ($$) International

THE ROOM *Sunset Marquis Hotel & Villas, 1200 Alta Loma Rd. (310-657-1333). B-L-D daily.* A baroque room in the rock and roll hotel of record serves lobster risotto, rack of lamb, and meat loaf with masheds to hipsters en route to the Whiskey Bar. Full bar. ($$$) Continental Eclectic

SONA *401 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-659-7708). D Tue.–Sat.* Chefs David and Michelle Myers have a gem. The interior is sophisticated, the staff is sharp, and the seductive little bar serves lacy lotus root chips. The food is sublime: sweetbreads on macaroni, wagyu for two, exquisite confit of wild Scottish salmon. Stunning desserts include Austrian pulled strudel with black beer ice cream. Full bar. ($$$) Modern French

THE SPANISH KITCHEN *826 N. La Cienega Blvd. (310-659-4794 or www.thespanishkitchen.com). D nightly.* The crowd is amped, the lights are low, the bar is jammed, and chef Hugo Molina is cooking his heart out: mesquite-smoked beef *flautas*, squash blossom soup, chicken mole, and a chocolate crepes with lobster appetizer that sounds iffy but is a tone poem. Good margaritas, too. Open late. Full bar. ($$$) Mexican

SURYA *8048 W. 3rd St. (323-653-5151). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Sapna, the manager, greets her diners like treasured guests, and by the inevitable second visit, you're family. Stuffed naan is a meal in itself, and the curries—vegetarian or with tender chicken or lamb—are exquisitely seasoned. Tandoori dishes are expertly cooked, and a prawn-pepper masala is comfort food, Eastern style. Beer and wine. ($$) Indian

SWINGERS *Beverly Laurel Motor Hotel, 8020 Beverly Blvd. (323-653-5858 or www.swingersdiner.com). B-L-D daily.* The kind of spot for people conducting business breakfasts at 3:30 p.m. or 1:30 a.m. L.A. scenemeister Sean MacPherson has morphed this nugget of the Kennedy era into a place where the MTV generation scarfs down tofu scrambles, chili omelettes, and smoothies. Beer and wine. ($) Eclectic

TALÉSAI *9043 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-275-9724 or www.talesai.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* One of our few upscale Thai restaurants is located in the heavy-metal ghetto on the Strip. Heavenly duck is marinated in ginger and soy before being steamed and fried, a charbroiled rib

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eye is served with chile-coconut sauce, and the *pad thai* is darn near perfect. Full bar. ($$) Thai

TANGERINE *8588 W. Sunset Blvd. (310-360-0274). D nightly.* Black-and-white photos of famous supper clubs line the restaurant's walls, early Sinatra plays in the background, and you can order baked Brie in puff pastry with pear chutney, grilled filet mignon, and a white-chocolate pecan tart while sipping a plum sake martini. Full bar. ($$$) Continental

TOAST *8221 W. 3rd St. (323-655-1018). B-L daily.* It doesn't look too special, but it's always packed. Maybe it's the waffles, or the eggs, or the little cupcakes with lemon icing. Or the soups, or sandwiches, quesadillas or burgers. Probably it's the combination of all those things. No alcohol. ($) Eclectic

BEVERLY HILLS

BARNEY GREENGRASS *Barneys New York, 9570 Wilshire Blvd. (310-777-5877). B-L daily.* The smoked fish emporium occupies a dazzling space on Barneys' top floor. The salmon, sturgeon, sable, and cod will bring tears to the eyes of the most seasoned deli lover. Plenty of salads to fawn over, too. Full bar. ($$) Deli/California

THE BELVEDERE *Peninsula Hotel, 9882 S. Santa Monica Blvd. (310-788-2306). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun.* This is an elegant room for power dining. At breakfast, it's anything from pancakes with chocolate butter to egg white omelettes. Later in the day, executive chef Bill Bracken's signature potato-crusted Chilean sea bass with an orange reduction sauce and fresh dill gives an idea of what's on tap. Full bar. ($$$) California

BLUE ON BLUE *Avalon Hotel, 9400 Olympic Blvd. (310-407-7791). B-L-D daily.* Here's indoor-outdoor dining at its easiest, with a hipster clientele likely to be sipping something blue and dining on creative salads, crab cakes, king salmon, and meat loaf. Dine poolside in a cabana, and stare at the stars for dessert. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-French

BOA *Crescent Hotel, 403 N. Crescent Dr. (310-247-0505). B-L-D daily.* The itty-bitty restaurant at the Crescent Hotel is casual—banquettes on the patio or a communal table inside—and the limited menu is nicely executed. French toast or eggs for breakfast, salad plates or a burger for lunch, and dinner selections that are in a hefty appetizer vein: Tahitian tuna *tartare* spilling out of a coconut; a plate of hummus, roasted eggplant, olives, feta, and breads; or *bulgogi* (thinly sliced beef served Korean style with lettuce and Asian pears). Great for a cocktails-and-a-nosh crowd. Full bar. ($$) Ethnic

CAFÉ TALÉSAI *9369 Olympic Blvd. (310-271-9349). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* This minimall version of the West Hollywood mother ship is small and often crowded. Authentic *tom yum* soup, first-rate *pad thai*, and curries and grilled meats are combined with a few nods to Western cuisine: papaya with prosciutto, chicken salad, crispy honey chicken wings, and corn fritters. Beer and wine. ($$) Thai

COBRA LILY *8442 Wilshire Blvd. (323-651-5951). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sat.* The interior's red, with funky chandeliers and two wild boar heads snarling from on high. Tapas—an abbreviated version of the Cobras & Matadors menu—and sangria are served, good before or after a show at the Wilshire Theater. Keep those tiny plates coming: crispy green lentils and *jamón serrano*, seared octopus with olive oil and *salsa verde*, salt cod cakes with aioli. All wines and cheeses are Spanish. Full bar. ($$) Tapas

DA PASQUALE *9749 S. Santa Monica Blvd. (310-859-3883). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* This authentic trattoria serves first-rate pasta, pizza, and fish. The sautéed seafood appetizer comes in a luscious broth perfect for scooping with the pizza bread. Desserts include a *tartuffo* of chocolate gelato encased in a dark chocolate crust—like an ice cream pop, only better. Beer and wine. ($$$) Southern Italian

ENOTECA DRAGO *410 N. Canon Dr. (310-786-8336 or www.celestinodrago.com). B-L-D daily.* Celestino Drago's new venture was SRO the minute the doors swung open. A Piedmontese beef steak is charred and rare, spaghetti with cracked pepper and Parmesan is ideal for go-easy nights, and pork cheeks with sausage, braised sauerkraut, and truffle mashedds are poetic. There are pizzas, more pastas, fish, and fowl. *Panini* star at lunch. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

GARDENS *Four Seasons Hotel, 300 S. Doheny Dr. (310-273-2222 or www.fourseasons.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun.* Squeeze through the bar scene to reach this sanctuary, and you may find celebs enjoying the delights of chef Conny Anderson's homemade sausage of crab, salmon, prawns with cognac-cured gravlax in a honey-dill sauce, Maine lobster with black truffle porridge, and the best steaks ever. Full bar. ($$$$) Cal-Mediterranean

THE GRILL ON THE ALLEY *9560 Dayton Way (310-276-0615). L Mon.–Sat.; D nightly.* The setting is decidedly masculine, the service perfect, the menu heavy with steaks, chops, and massive vegetable dishes. Martinis and moguls are in their element amid the wood, brass, and leather. Full bar. ($$$) American

IL CIELO *9018 Burton Way (310-276-9990 or www.ilcielo.com). L-D Mon.–Sat.* Pasquale Vericella's dreamy little garden spot has been the site of many a tryst and more than a few weddings. Come in for homemade pasta, or try the Italian sea bass, grilled whole and filleted tableside. Full bar. ($$$) Northern Italian

IL PASTAIO *400 N. Canon Dr. (310-205-5444 or www.celestinodrago.com). L Mon.–Sat.; D nightly.* Celestino Drago's restaurant is always good for antipasti, carpaccio, pasta, and risotto and reminds you of the homey neighborhood cafés found all over Italy. Full bar. ($$) Regional Italian

JAAN *Raffles L'Ermitage, 9291 Burton Way (310-385-5344). B-L-D daily.* The room is blond and modern, the diners are dressed in black, the food is the edible equivalent of a bespoke suit, and the service is impeccable. A thick arctic char is moist beneath a crisped skin, and Kobe beef tenderloin is one decadent dish. Desserts come with the likes of Java pepper ice cream, sour cream–pineapple sorbet, and litchi granita. Full bar. ($$$) California

LARRY FLYNT'S CABARET *424 N. Beverly Dr. (310-275-8122). D Tue.–Sat.* Bring your kids on—Larry Flynt's new supper club is fairly tame. Frankie's Gypsy Roses start their burlesque show at 8:30 and continue through the evening on a large stage facing an enormous picture of *Hustler*'s famed creator. The food? Good! Foie gras with scallops, roasted Cherry garlic custard with chanterelles, black truffles, and wilted arugula; and lobster with butternut squash risotto and sautéed parsnips. Full bar. ($$$) Continental

LA SCALA *434 N. Canon Dr (310-275-9579). L-D Mon.–Sat.* The famous and infamous come to this Beverly Hills institution to dine on breaded and deep-fried mozzarella, grilled chicken sausage with peppers, Tuscan *cannellini*, and a delish *linguine frutti di mare* consisting of every sea creature unlucky enough to get caught in the net. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

LOT 1224 *Loews Beverly Hills Hotel, 1224 S. Beverwil Dr. (310-277-2800). B-L-D daily.* This is a casual spot on the flip side of a bar whose newest creations are no-carb cocktails for Zoners. The food is good, varied, and modestly priced, from a sashimi salad to charred-pumpkin ravioli, wok-fried shrimp to a grilled black Angus strip. Gracious staff to boot. Full bar. ($$$) California

MAKO *235 S. Beverly Dr. (310-288-8338). L Wed.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* The open kitchen is almost as large as the blond wood dining room at this outstanding restaurant. Mako Tanaka and crew balletically whip up crispy oyster and pickled beet salads, wok-sautéed sea bass with rapini and mushrooms, and a menu of delectable small-plate dishes. Full bar. ($$$) Asian Fusion

MAPLE DRIVE *345 N. Maple Dr. (310-274-9800 or www.mapledrivrestaurant.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* This dining room on a leafy street is buzzing thanks to chef Eric Klein, whose cooking is so sensitive and intuitive, it's hard to quantify. Try his diver scallop sashimi or wild mushroom ravioli with fried leeks or roasted duck breast with a foie gras spring roll or coconut-lemongrass rice pudding napoleon, and you'll get the gist—and go weak in the knees. A jazz trio plays Tuesdays through Saturdays. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-Fusion

MARIPOSA *Neiman Marcus, 9700 Wilshire Blvd. (310-550-5900). L.Mon.–Sat.* This in-store café on the ground floor of Neiman's is a destination in its own right—lush and comfortable, with great service and surprisingly good food, from Petrossian beluga with toast points to a Cobb salad with lobster to beef tenderloin with goat cheese mashed. If you've already tried on the bathing suit, go for the banana split. Full bar. ($$$) California

MASSIMO *9533 S. Santa Monica Blvd. (310-273-7588 or www.massimobh.com). L.Mon.–Sat.; D nightly.* Massimo and Daniela Ormani have a romantic charmer where tiny greens are perfectly dressed, leek and crabmeat risotto is infused with lemon, and an oven-roasted veal shank comes with baby carrots. Hazelnut cake keeps the Tuscan theme going, and the well-culled wine list is reasonably priced. Full bar. ($$$) Tuscan

MASTRO'S STEAKHOUSE *246 N. Camon Dr. (310-888-8782 or www.mastrossteakhouse.com). D nightly.* This place is serious about its meat: hand-cut USDA prime served with the bone in on 400-degree plates. Supreme. It's also serious about its martinis, which come in full-size shakers left at your table. Lots of stately fishes to choose from as well. Upstairs is a buzzy bar scene with live music for an over-40 crowd. Full bar. ($$$$) Steak House

MR CHOW *344 N. Camden Dr. (310-278-9911 or www.mrchow.com). L.Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Prices are high—particularly if you let the waiter order for you—but the food's good and celeb spotting likely. Famed dishes include green prawns (marinated in spinach juice), drunken fish (poached in rice wine), handmade noodles, and gambler's duck (marinated, steamed, fried, shredded). Full bar. ($$$) Chinese

OLIVER CAFÉ *9601 Wilshire Blvd. (310-888-8160). B-L-D daily.* The setting's very Judy Jetson, all chrome and white and curvilinear. And the food is creative and tasty—particularly considering that the outfit is connected to the new Sports Club L.A. *Panini* and wraps come with greens and ratatouille, the smoothies are meals unto themselves, and salads, like one with seared tuna, match proteins and roughage in a beautiful way. And you can get a martini (no carbs!) to slam down the wheat grass. Full bar. ($$) Healthy California

PICCOLO PARADISO *150 S. Beverly Dr. (310-271-0030 or www.giacominodrago.com). L.Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* This is indeed a "little paradise," thanks to chef Giacomino Drago, who is also at Il Pastaio. Images from *Cinema Paradiso* are projected on the walls, salads and antipasti are delightfully simple, and entrées of note include rigatoni with wild boar ragout and veal shank with polenta. Beer and wine. ($$) Italian

POLO LOUNGE *Beverly Hills Hotel, 9641 Sunset Blvd. (310-276-2251). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun.* This was a power-breakfast spot before there was such a thing. Tried-and-true favorites, including the McCarthy salad, are as good as ever. So are updates like the shrimp and scallops stir-fried with sweet chile sauce and shredded green papaya. Full bar. ($$$) International

SPAGO BEVERLY HILLS *176 N. Camon Dr. (310-385-0880 or www.wolfgangpuck.com). L.Mon.–Sat.; D nightly.* You've read the books, seen the TV show—now sit at Wolfgang Puck's illustrious table. What could be ordinary—crawfish salad, filet mignon tartare, yellowtail, veal chop, lobster with asparagus puree—becomes, in the hands of exec chef Lee Hefter, extraordinary. Sherry Yard's desserts are equally rapturous. Full bar. ($$$) California

TRADER VIC'S *Beverly Hilton Hotel, 9876 Wilshire Blvd. (310-276-6345). D nightly.* You've had a few tiki drinks, you've sipped from a giant coconut, and you think you know Trader Vic's. Ha. Scoot around to the back, a yesteryear of red leather booths, brass railings, giant menus, and solicitous waiters. The real surprise is the food: artfully arranged sushi, whole lobsters, cashew chicken, and great steaks. Keep the mai tais to a minimum, and savor the flavor. Full bar. ($$$) Euro-Asian

208 RODEO *208 Rodeo Dr. (310-275-2428). L-D daily.* Make your way up the cobblestone street once known as Via Rodeo, past the likes of Persol and Pierre Deux, and you'll hit this European-style café. Weather per-





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mitting, everyone sits outside, and most speak with accents as they nibble on chopped salads, Moroccan *poussin*, and ahi sandwiches. Pooches are welcome at select outside tables, and martini happy hour runs from 3 to 6 p.m. Full bar. ($$) Continental

WESTWOOD & WEST L.A.

AMICI BRENTWOOD *2538 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood (310-260-4900 or www.tamici.com). L. Mon.–Sat.; D nightly.* The Amici folks have finally opened their new location, and it's filled with the same warmth, friendliness, and authentic, unfussy Italian cuisine we've come to expect. The room is bright and the menu filled with such classics as shaved artichoke and hearts of palm salad, thin-crust pizzas, all manner of pastas, and entrée staples like chicken parmigiana, osso buco, and seafood soup. Hard to go wrong. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

BREEZE *Century Plaza Hotel, 2025 Avenue of the Stars, Century City (310-551-3334 or www.breezela.com). B-L-D daily.* Stop on your way to or from the Entertainment Center. It's spacious and quiet, and the food is stellar: clams and oysters on the half shell, peeky toe crab cakes, thick pork chops with white cheddar macaroni. Desserts live up to all that goes before. Full bar. ($$$) California Eclectic

THE BRENTWOOD *148 S. Barrington Ave., Brentwood (310-476-3511 or www.brentwoodrestaurant.com). D nightly.* Owner Bruce Marder (Capo) caters to the Brentwood set with standout appetizers like prosciutto and figs and a tuna carpaccio. Then it's pasta, pizza, meat loaf, short ribs, and dry-aged New York steak. Seal the deal with the Devil's Sin Cake. Full bar. ($$$) American

CASA ANTIGUA CANTINA *12217 Wilshire Blvd., West L.A. (310-820-2540 or www.casaantigua.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The place has an authentic feel even before you order your first (very good) margarita. The menu merges traditional *comida* with contemporary taste: white shrimp tacos, shredded tilapia in puff pastry. Cornish hen with *achiote* sauce—and a fine Caesar salad. Full bar. ($$$) Mexican

EL DORADO CANTINA *11777 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood (310-207-0150 or www.eldoradocantina.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sun.* A Mexican restaurant with a velvet rope. Go figure. The scene here is at the bar, but the food's tasty, too. Alongside standard enchilada and taco fare are a silky corn soup, melt-in-your-mouth *carne asada*, and spicy *pollo mole*. Full bar. ($$$) Mexican

ENCORE *St. Regis Hotel, 2055 Avenue of the Stars, Century City (310-277-6111 or www.starwood.com). B-L daily; D Tue.–Sat.* The dining room is a destination in its own right, thanks to chef Toni Robertson. The menu changes seasonally but might include roasted corn soup, handmade goat cheese ravioli, citrus-dusted scallops with asparagus risotto, or lemon-pistachio-crusted Colorado rack of lamb with white anchovy–picoline olive sauce. Service is formal, and the room is romantic. Full bar. ($$$$) California

FOUR OAKS *2181 N. Beverly Glen Blvd., Bel-Air (310-470-1633 or www.fouroaksrestaurant.com). L Tue.–Sat.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sun.* This secluded garden restaurant smacks of the fine eateries of Provence, where the tables wobble, the service can be bemused, but the chef is always on the money. Full bar. ($$$) French/American

THE GARDENS ON GLENDON *1119 Glendon Ave., Westwood (310-824-1818 or www.gardensonglendon.com). L-D daily.* The neighborhood restaurant was never this uptown. From tableside guacamole to a dry-aged New York steak, the menu is varied and has a fresh Provençal feel. Try the crab spring rolls wrapped in lettuce in a tamarind sauce and finish with a latte in a giant cup. Full bar. ($$$) Continental

HAMASAKU *11043 Santa Monica Blvd., West L.A. (310-479-7636). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* At this minimall spot it's easy to order a medley of starters and call it a meal. The mixed tempura is tasty, and the salmon sashimi roll is wrapped in cucumber with caviar. Entrées include rack of lamb, chicken teriyaki, and assorted sushi and sashimi dinners. Beer and wine. ($$$) Japanese

IL MORO *11400 W. Olympic Blvd., West L.A. (310-575-3330). L Mon.–Sat.; D nightly.* Power lunchers bored with Westwood opt for this trattoria and its breezy patio. There's a kingly spaghetti with porcini, chicken sausage, olives, and onions. For dessert, the *cassata*—zabaglione and chocolate ice cream with orange peel, hazelnuts, and candied cherries—reigns. Beer and wine. ($$) Italian

LA CACHETTE *10506 S. Santa Monica Blvd., Century City (310-470-4992 or www.lacachetterestaurant.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Master French chef Jean François Meteigner serves his exquisite food in a beautiful dining room presided over by his wife, Allie Ko. From Petrossian caviar to foie gras terrine, Marseilles bouillabaisse to sweetbreads with black chanterelle–morel sauce, venison medallions to braised lamb shank, it's all extraordinary. Full bar. ($$$) French



NEW

Beacon

Kazuto Matsusaka and his wife, Vicki Fan, have an instant hit on their hands. This small unfussy bistro in the Helms Bakery complex has high ceilings, cement walls, square tables, and two tiny outdoor areas. The food's Asian accents are subtle but unmistakable. An avocado salad is dressed with a vinaigrette and intense microgreens; green tea soba are tossed with shredded pea pods and carrots and studded with broiled shrimp. The *bento* box, perfect for lunch, includes sashimi, superb grilled chicken, and chilled veggies. Desserts rock, too; litchi sorbet with raspberries, or a sundae with little Rice Krispies squares and ribbons of chocolate and caramel. *3280 Helms Ave., Culver City (310-838-7500). L daily; D Tue.–Sun. Beer and wine. ($$) Asian Bistro*

EDMUND BARR

LEMON MOON *12200 W. Olympic Blvd., West L.A. (310-442-9191 or www.lemonmoon.com). B-L Mon.–Fri.* Located in an office complex and set up cafeteria style, this is the best fast food place you're likely to find on the Westside. Chefs Josiah Citrin and Raphael Lunetta apply their gourmet talents to easy breakfast and lunch fare—great pastries, eggs, breads, sandwiches, soups, and farmers' market fresh salads. Can't go wrong. Eat at the long table inside or under an umbrella on the patio. Validated parking below. Beer and wine. ($) American Deli

THE RESTAURANT *Hotel Bel-Air, 701 Stone Canyon Rd., Bel-Air (310-472-5234 or www.hotelbelair.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun.; tea Mon.–Sat.* Considered by many the most romantic spot in Los Angeles, this hotel dining room and patio is approached by crossing over a swan-filled stream and traversing a flowered path to an elegant space where the fireplace is always lit, even in the heat of summer. The food is exquisite. Full bar. ($$$$) Cal-French

THE RESTAURANT AT THE GETTY CENTER *1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A. (310-440-6810 or www.getty.edu). L Tue.–Sat.; D Fri.–Sat.; brunch Sun.* You'll spot Getty architect Richard Meier and art-world bigwigs in this reservations-only dining room in the sky. Everything from the classic California cuisine to the wrap-around vistas—stunning at sundown—is perfect at this museum restaurant. Full bar. ($$$) California

SUSHI MASU *1911 Westwood Blvd., Westwood (310-446-4368). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.* Aside from a stentorian sushi chef from the school of culinary acrobatics and his succulent sushi, you'll find *bento* boxes, *kaitseki*, and such sides as monkfish liver with mountain caviar and delightful fried soft-shell crab. Beer and wine. ($$) Japanese

TANINO *1043 Westwood Blvd., Westwood (310-208-0444 or www.tanino.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The food at Tanino Dragos upstairs/downstairs spot is superb: calamari stew, carpaccio, artichoke salad, pumpkin and sage lasagna, risotto with shrimp and truffles, grilled ahi, and T-bone with baby bok choy. Velvety *panna cotta* with a berry compote is the ultimate kicker. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

TENGU *10853 Lindbrook Dr., Westwood (310-209-0071 or www.tengu.cc). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The three-sided bar is ever hopping, and the restaurant–cum–sushi bar is always packed. The sushi is fresh and prettily presented, and the tempura is delightful. Coconut ice cream is served in a coconut husk and hits the spot. Full bar. ($$$) Japanese

VINCENTI *11930 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood (310-207-0127). L Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* Few restaurateurs have the devotion and spirit of Maureen Vincenti, whose late husband, Mauro, was the proprietor of downtown's landmark Rex. On-site every night, she greets most of her guests by name and routinely makes regulars of newcomers. Working in a giant glass-walled kitchen running alongside the sunken dining room, chef Nicola Mastronardi is remarkable, turning out delicate pizzas (on Monday), authentic pastas, rotisserie-cooked fish and meats, and beautiful vegetable creations with the soul of the old country served sunny-side up. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

ZAX *11604 San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood (310-571-1800 or www.zaxrestaurant.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D nightly.* Owners Chris and Chantal Schaefer have a knack for finding gifted young chefs. These days it's British-born Gavin Portsmouth, whose résumé includes London's Connaught and New York's An American Place. His combinations are inspired, and refreshing for their understanding of how flavors play with one another: ricotta gnocchi with a sweet pea and sage cream, duck breast with citrus-glazed carrots, kale, and bitter orange sauce, and a dry-aged New York steak with tempura onion rings and caramelized shallots. On the page it may sound disparate, but on the plate it's damn near perfect. Full bar. ($$$) American

ZEN GRILL AND SAKE LOUNGE *1053 Broxton Ave., Westwood (310-209-1994). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* This is a wonderful addition to the Village: an Asian restaurant whose decor is as compelling as its food. Tall ceilings, dim lighting, enigmatic Buddha paintings, and a loft area with a communal table give this place art and soul. Chef Ryu Hamada gives it taste—supreme: *bar gow*, fish carpaccio, Mongolian lamb, green curries. Outstanding service. Wine, beer, and sake. ($$) Fusion

MARINA DEL REY

AUNT KIZZY'S BACK PORCH *4325 Glencoe Ave., Marina del Rey (310-578-1005). L-D daily; brunch Sun.* To many, it's the best Southern restaurant in town, with its massive plates of family-recipe fried chicken and down-home baked ribs. The all-you-can-eat Sunday brunch is a true test of willpower. No alcohol. ($) Southern

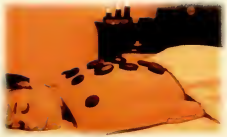
BALLONA FISH MARKET *13455 Maxella Ave., Marina del Rey (310-822-8979). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Hans and Patti Röckenwagner's New England–style fish house offers a neatly tweaked compilation of classics: crab cakes with lemongrass mayo, Caesar salad with crisp fried oysters, opah with mission fig compote, pretzel burgers. Perfect before or after a movie in the Villa Marina Marketplace. Full bar. ($$$) Seafood

BUGGY WHIP *7420 La Tijera Blvd., Westchester (310-645-7531). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Red leather booths, mature waiters, and a piano player crooning "My Way" make this unabashed throwback so retro it's now. No-fuss cuisine is served in Elizabethan portions: steak, lobster, pork chops with applesauce, and a roast beef platter that would make Fred Flintstone flinch. Get your iceberg wedge with a dollop of green goddess. Wave to the piano man—and the photos of Liberace—as you leave. Full bar. ($$$) Continental



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CHLOE *333 Culver Blvd., Playa del Rey (310-305-4505 or www.chloerestaurant.com). D Mon.–Sat.* This small restaurant and its top-notch wine list are raising the bar in Playa. Chilled leeks with egg mimosa (grated hard-boiled *ouefs*) or seared scallops with a frisée salad set the tone for what's to come: sautéed monkfish with shrimp, baby clams, and fingerlings, perhaps, or a perfectly cooked Angus sirloin with artichokes and potato hash. Beer and wine. ($$$) Progressive American

JER-NE *Ritz-Carlton in the Marina, 4375 Admiralty Way, Marina del Rey (310-574-4333 or www.troythompson.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun.* This beautiful room can be noisy, particularly when events are booked on the patio, but chef Troy Thompson's food more than compensates: delicately rich Kobe carpaccio, grilled sturgeon with rhubarb, and a New York strip with smoked Gouda croquettes. A daily *bento* box, dim sum, and Peking duck are inspired. Full bar. ($$$) California

CULVER CITY & VENICE

AMUSE CAFÉ *796 Main St., Venice (310-450-1956 or www.amusecafe.com). L Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* Chefs Brooke Williamson and Nick Roberts are serving a small menu composed mostly of small plates: steamed mussels, seasonal salads, fish and vegetables, a tasty rib eye burger. For brunch, eggs and pancakes. Desserts include a brownie sundae with mint ice cream and M&M's. Liquor license pending. ($$) American Bistro

AXE *1009 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-664-9787 or www.axerestaurant.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* The atmosphere is minimalist, but the food is creative and hearty—fresh fish and meats, seasonal vegetables. After an appetizer of grilled flatbread with hummus, eggplant, and caramelized onion spreads, tuck into miso-marinated halibut or duck leg confit with plum-orange sauce. Dessert? Chocolate brownie pudding or cobbler. Beer and wine. ($$$) Eclectic

CANAL CLUB *2025 Pacific Ave., Venice (310-823-3878). D nightly.* A giant sushi and oyster bar anchors this stylish space (one of Frank Gehry's early landmarks). Appetizers range from sesame noodles and beef tacos to tempura chicken and eggplant fritters. Entrées include grilled swordfish with red bean puree and an exquisite porterhouse. Full bar. ($$$) Pacific Rim/Seafood

CHAYA VENICE *110 Navy St., Venice (310-396-1179 or www.thechaya.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Talk about a jumpin' joint. Happy hour's a mob of the sleek and chic at this Asia moderne happening, and the food is always top-notch. Everything—from carpaccio, sashimi, sushi, and seaweed salad to the pastas and the vegetarian plate—is superbly prepared. Full bar. ($$$) French/Asian

HAL'S BAR & GRILL *1349 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-396-3105 or www.halsbarandgrill.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun.* A main hang for Venice's artsy crowd, this room is home to one of the city's supreme vegetarian plates as well as fine grilled dishes served in a space that would work just as well in SoHo. But the attitude is turned way down. Full bar. ($$) California

JAMES' BEACH *60 N. Venice Blvd., Venice (310-823-5396). L Wed.–Sun.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun.* The menu at James Evans's neighborhood restaurant couples fresh takes on American classics such as chicken potpie and Maine lobster with the likes of panfried sand dabs and grilled portobello. Full bar. ($$) American

JOE'S RESTAURANT *1023 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-399-5811 or www.joesrestaurant.com). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* Joe Miller's subtly stylish restaurant is a Venice landmark that serves upscale creative food at moderate prices. Entrées include beef risotto with grilled asparagus and crispy chicken with a spring vegetable ragout. Lunch and brunch are top-notch bargains. Full bar. ($$) Cal-French

PAM'S PLACE *636 Venice Blvd., Venice (310-301-8002). L Mon.–Sat.; D nightly.* Every delicious dish at chef Pam Klinglian gsompit's place is made individually and comes straight from stove to table. There's no going wrong: egg rolls, divine *pad thai*, flaming chicken or beef, shrimp with roasted chiles. The young coconut custard dessert is incredible. Beer and wine. ($$) Thai

NEW **PICCOLO CIPRIANI** *5 Dudley Ave., Venice (310-314-5222 or www.piccolocipriani.com). L Fri.–Sun.; D nightly.* Stefano de Lorenzo and partner-chef Antonio Mure, whose combined résumé includes Valentino, Locanda Veneta, and Il Moro, have opened a friendly little beachside restaurant in the old 5 Dudley spot. You'll be waved in enthusiastically by everyone in the kitchen before taking a seat amid Venetian *carnevale* masks and photos of the canals. The pastas—potato-and-fig *tortelli*, veal-and-spinach ravioli—are simple and flavorful, and a Caesar salad gets a fresh twist. Beer and wine. ($$$) Italian

PRIMITIVO WINE BISTRO *1025 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-396-5393). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Tapas rule here—fried calamari, cheese plates, and all manner of Spanish meat, but standard entrées are also a possibility. A generous selection of wines by the glass, a minimalchic room with cement floors, and a cool but nonsnooty vibe keep this place packed. Beer and wine. ($$–$$$) Mediterranean

WABI SABI *1639 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Venice (310-396-8857). D nightly.* This is a real neighborhood restaurant with an extensive sushi menu complemented by salads (calamari and snow peas), appetizers (popcorn-crusted chicken wings), and entrées (bouillabaisse ladled over a chewy rice cake, tender beef fillet with pumpkin puree). The desserts are Asian spiced. Full bar. ($$) Japanese

SANTA MONICA

UPDATE **AKWA** *1413 5th St. (310-656-9688 or akwasantamonica.com). D Mon.–Sat.* Union has changed its name and added a sushi bar. Identity problems are old hat on the site that's seen Rix, Abiquiu, and Bikini in the memorable past. Sushi standards are served standardly on the ground floor, and a heartier menu—spicy lemongrass soup, Scottish salmon with yuzu-champagne sauce, pork tenderloin with apple-smoked bacon—is served upstairs, where the bar and patio reside. The upstairs menu is served downstairs, but sushi is not served upstairs. Is there an analyst in the house? Full bar. ($$$$) Cal-Asian

BUFFALO CLUB *1520 Olympic Blvd. (310-450-8609). L Mon.–Fri.; D Mon.–Sat.* Don't be fooled by the drab exterior. Inside it's men's club elegant, and the food fits the scene: hush puppies alongside lamb chops, onion rings made with chile, and pot roast that can be ordered with a side of mac and Vermont cheddar. For dessert try the diggity-divine pecan pie-crumble sundae with bittersweet chocolate sauce. Full bar. ($$$) American

CAPO *1810 Ocean Ave. (310-394-5550 or www.foodcowest.com). D Tue.–Sat.* Bruce Marder's tiny, romantic room sits smack on the ocean (no views, though) next to the Santa Monica Pier. The menu is short and simple—filet mignon, rack of lamb, lobster risotto, et al.—and the ingredients are exquisite. Finish with candied bread pudding. Full bar. ($$$$) Italian

CÉZANNE *Le Merigot Hotel, 1740 Ocean Ave. (310-395-9700 or www.lemerigothotel.com). B-L-D daily.* The formal dining room with tuxedoed waiters breaks from hotel-restaurant tradition by offering sterling food and a choice of prix fixe menus. Full bar. ($$$$) Classic French

CHEZ JAY *1657 Ocean Ave. (310-395-1741). L-D daily; brunch Sat.–Sun.* Across the street from the Santa Monica Pier, Chez Jay may be the perfect L.A. restaurant: sawdust on the floor, Dino on the jukebox, and beachcombers and movie directors elbow-to-elbow at the bar. The food—steamed clams, swordfish, steak—is really just another good excuse for one more round. Full bar. ($$) American

CINCH *1559 Wilshire Blvd. (310-395-2339). D nightly.* This place is expert in attitude, less so in service. The maitre d' may snicker if you call for a same-night reservation



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(despite having room), and if you aren't a CPF of someone on duty, chances are you'll be led to a nasty little table overlooking the real dining room. Shrimp billed with watercress comes instead with romaine, and salads are generally overdressed. Simpler entrées fare better, and desserts are lovely. Lively bar scenes upstairs and down. Full bar. ($$$) Franco-Japanese

CHINOIS ON MAIN *2709 Main St. (310-392-9025 or www.wolfgangpuck.com). L Wed.–Fri.; D nightly.* Salads and the sashimi appetizer are exquisite and light at Wolfgang Puck's French fusion restaurant, leaving room for tasty entrées along the lines of Cantonese duck and barbecued salmon with black and gold pasta. The crème brûlée trio has a flavor for everyone. Full bar. ($$$) French/Asian

THE COUNTER *2901 Ocean Park Blvd. (310-399-8383 or www.thecounterburger.com). L-D daily.* Now here's a menu with focus: burgers. Turkey burgers, veggie burgers, and good old beef burgers. On an English muffin, on a whole wheat bun, or in a bowl without a bun. With a bottle of Belgian beer. Beer and wine. ($) Burgers

DRAGO *2628 Wilshire Blvd. (310-828-1585 or www.celestinodrago.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Celestino Drago pursues his love of Sicilian cooking with dazzling success in this striking restaurant, where the setting contrasts with the casual cuisine—dishes like tortellini with pumpkin in a butter-sage sauce and eggplant cooked a dozen ways. Full bar. ($$) Italian

FATHER'S OFFICE *1018 Montana Ave. (310-393-BEER or www.fathersoffice.com). D nightly.* This is a bar, emphasis on beer, and entrance age is 21. Chef-owner Sang Yoon makes primo tapas: imported *Jamón serrano*, spicy olives, and house-cured white anchovies. He's also got one of L.A.'s best burgers, made with

CONNOISSEUR'S CORNER

Sipping Down Life

In a glass, frozen sake crystals sparkle like clear slush; in the mouth they melt into Pop Rock–like bursts of flavor. They're made of premium dry genuine draft sake, or *arabashiri*, which is prized for its freshness—filtered just once and bottled immediately at Southern California's only sake brewery, Yaegaki USA, in Vernon. Because the sake is unpasteurized, says Reiko Waide, Yaegaki's head of production and America's sole sake brew mistress, "we store it frozen."



COOL BREWER: Sake mistress Reiko Waide

Since 1660, Yaegaki's parent company has been making sake at its *jizake kura* (artisanal brewery) in Hyogo prefecture, northwest of Osaka, and still produces award-winning brews there. In 1986, expanding consumption in the United States and declining sales in Japan prompted the firm to begin production in sushi bar–intensive L.A. With local sales increasing more than 100 percent in the past five years, Yaegaki opened yet another brewery in Vernon last November, doubling production capacity.

Waide had been working for a sushi delivery company that Yaegaki absorbed. She transferred to the sake enterprise and took on menial tasks: shoveling warm rice into fermentation vats, filling and capping bottles by hand. Eventually she went to Japan to learn centuries-old master sake-making techniques and discovered that the local springwater was a key to the kura's flavorful sakes. At Yaegaki USA's new brewery, filtration systems can replicate Hyogo's famous water. Although many traditional methods are still employed, the facility boasts automated bottling machinery, temperature sensors, and hoses that transport rice from the cooking cauldrons to the fermenting tanks.

Under Waide's aegis, Yaegaki produces two less expensive pasteurized sakes alongside its arabashiri. Yaegaki Dry is aged three months, and Ki Ippon, usually served warm, about two. But the sophisticated arabashiri—with 18 to 19 percent naturally fermented alcohol—possesses, like raw milk cheese or a good microbrewed draft beer, the most intricate structure and subtle layerings of flavor. *—Linda Burum*

Yoegaki brews are available at most Japanese supermarkets, including Mitsuwa, Maruki, and Nijiya.

EDMUND BARR

Gruyère and Maytag blue and served on a perfectly toasted arugula-stuffed bun. Order at the bar. Beer and wine. ($) Tapas

THE GRILLE *Fairmont Miramar, 101 Wilshire Blvd. (310-319-3111). B-L-D daily.* Perfectly prepared steaks, veal chops, and fish pair with the likes of Gorgonzola mashed potatoes and corn risotto. Warm apple tart à la mode for dessert. Full bar. ($$$) California/Mediterranean

THE HUMP *Santa Monica Airport, 3221 Donald Douglas Loop South (310-313-0377 or www.typhoon-restaurant.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The sushi's as good as it gets, and so is everything else here. A sashimi salad pairs spicy greens with a fresh selection of fish and octopus, the soft-shell crabs (seasonal) are exquisite, and conch is served raw or sautéed with asparagus and mushrooms. Full bar. ($$) Japanese

IVY AT THE SHORE *1541 Ocean Ave. (310-393-3113). L-D daily.* The Ivy's ocean-adjacent outpost sports tropical-beach-shack decor and a patio. As on Robertson, the food is excellent and the celeb sightings frequent. Why mess with perfection? Also at 113 N. Robertson Blvd. (310-274-8303). Full bar. ($$$) American

JIRAFFE *502 Santa Monica Blvd. (310-917-6671 or www.jirafferestaurant.com). D nightly.* Raphael Lunetta's food is elegant and accented with intense flavors: purple Peruvian potato gnocchi with rock shrimp, roast rabbit with polenta, a caramelized pork chop with cider sauce. Warm chocolate truffle cake for dessert. Full bar. ($$) French Rustic

JOSIE *2424 Pico Blvd. (310-581-9888 or www.josierestaurant.com). D nightly.* Chef Josie LeBalch indulges her flair for Italian, French, and game, which means creations like seared baby cuttlefish on warm sausage-studded lentils, rack of lamb with a marmalade onion–potato tart, fish *tagine* with preserved lemon, or Texas wild boar. Crumble or lemon zabaglione for dessert. Full bar. ($$$) Progressive American

JULIANO'S RAW *609 Broadway (310-587-1552 or www.planetraw.com). L-D daily.* You're apt to see raw guru Juliano Brotman in his flip-flops at the juice bar sipping Alien's Blood (apple, ginger, lime, and beet) if he's not in the kitchen turning out "raw-violi" (whipped pine nut "cheese" between thin slices of daikon), "mana" (baked on a rock in Palm Springs for 10 hours"), and innovative raw and vegan imitations of *pad thai*, tuna salad, and pizza (on sprouted buckwheat). The food is tasty, clean, and green. Service and setup are casual, but prices are not. No alcohol. ($$$) Raw

LAVANDE *Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, 1700 Ocean Ave. (310-576-3180 or www.loewshotels.com). B-L-D daily; brunch Sun.* If you're looking for a quiet place to hear yourself—and your dining companions—talk, the quest is ended. At night, the illuminated Ferris wheel on the pier offers a colorful backdrop; in daylight, you have a full view of the beach. The food is simple—roast meats and fish, pastas and salads—and the service discreet. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-Mediterranean

LINCOLN *2360 Wilshire Blvd. (310-828-3304). D nightly.* The team behind Tengu, Nacional, and Paladar have opened this tiny steak place for trendy types. The tables are squished together, the "*amuse bouche*" is nothing more than toast with tomato spread, and there's some unearned pretension at the front desk. That said, the meat and fish are beautifully prepared, and if you're a fan of designer Kelly Wearstler's antler chandeliers, you'll love the decor. Full bar. ($$$$) Steak House

THE LOBSTER *1602 Ocean Ave. (310-458-9294 or www.the-lobster.com). L-D daily.* Quality doesn't cede to quantity at this packed beachside restaurant and bar on the Santa Monica Pier. Allyson Thurber cooks up jumbo lump crab cakes, knockout spicy Louisiana prawns with dirty rice, seared ahi, and of course, fresh steamed Maine lobster like the serious chef that she is. Full bar. ($$$) Seafood

MÉLISSE *1104 Wilshire Blvd. (310-395-0881 or www.melisse.com). D nightly.* The tariff is steep at Josiah Citrin's foodie mecca, but the cuisine is exquisite: Mandarin tomato soup with goat cheese–sweet garlic flan, mille-feuille of ahi tartare with fennel sauce and tapenade, wild king salmon with lima bean puree, or the ineffably dreamy chef's menu. The cheese course is fit for a king. Full bar. ($$$$) French/American

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MICHAEL'S *1147 3rd St. (310-451-0843 or www.michaelssantamonica.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D. Mon.–Sat.* The garden is the most romantic in town, and the food's reliable. Choices may include sautéed spot prawns with carrot pesto and jalapeño oil, rosemary–chicken liver mousse, or as entrées, a seared salmon or a classic dry-aged steak with *pommes frites*. It's all good. Full bar. ($$$) California

OCEANFRONT *Hotel Casa Del Mar, 1910 Ocean Way (310-581-7714 or www.casadelmar.com). B–L–D daily.* This sophisticated restaurant abuts one of the nicest cocktail lounges at the beach and boasts an ocean view. The food is serious and seasonal. Full bar. ($$$$) Continental

ONE PICO *Shutters on the Beach, 1 Pico Blvd. (310-587-1717 or www.shuttersonthebeach.com). L–D daily.* With its ocean view, high ceilings, and fireplace, this light-filled restaurant gets almost nothing wrong: grilled shrimp with orange butter, house-cured salmon with corn cakes and crème fraîche, oysters with a dab of caviar and lemongrass cream, perfectly grilled lamb chops. Full bar. ($$$) California

ROCCA *1432A 4th St. (310-395-6765). D nightly.* There's a gem. Donald Dikmak takes personal pride in greeting his guests, and chef Donald Dickman in feeding them. This is Italian food at its accessible best: prosciutto with *burrata*, beet root with ricotta, sautéed Alaskan halibut, lemon *panna cotta*. Smart wine list and service, too. Beer and wine. ($$) Italian

RÖCKENWAGNER/THE BRASSERIE *2435 Main St., Edgemar Center (310-399-6104 or www.rockenwagner.com). D nightly; brunch Sun.* Hans and Patti Röckenwagner offer two dining experiences: Sit in a 28-seat inner sanctum for a tasting menu or just eat bistro style—roasted beets with goat cheese, veal goulash with spaetzle, sole with artichokes. First class or coach? Either works. Full bar. ($$$) California

SAM'S *108 W. Channel Rd. (310-230-9100). D Tue.–Sun.* Owner Samer Elias is showcasing the Mediterranean here: Sea urchin on arugula, bluefin tuna *tartare*, red pepper soup, and grilled escolar served with citrus fruits are all outstanding. The milk custard in a phyllo bird's nest with rose water syrup is an exotic kicker. Beer and wine. ($$$) Cal-Mediterranean

TYPHOON *Santa Monica Airport, 3221 Donald Douglas Loop South (310-390-6565 or www.typhoon-restaurant.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sun.* Sip Pacific Rim suds overlooking the Santa Monica runway, and nosh on all manner of Asian fish, veggie, meat, and noodle dishes, or delve into the insect world with Taiwanese-style crickets served with raw garlic, chiles, and Asian basil. Full bar. ($$) Pan-Asian

VALENTINO *3115 Pico Blvd. (310-829-4313 or www.pierofelicivalentino.com). L. Fri.; D. Mon.–Sat.* Piero Selvaggio's flagship changed the way we perceive Italian cooking, and his standards rival those of the finest restaurants worldwide. He seduces us with the best white truffles, the purest olive oils, the tenderest prosciutto, and a wine cellar that's won numerous awards and lured diners from around the world. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

VODA *1449 2nd St. (310-394-9774 or www.vodabar.com). D Tue.–Sat.* There's vodka, vodka everywhere (more than 50 brands) at this dark, hip boite where fresh oysters vie for attention with rack of lamb, flaky halibut, and a juicy hunk of New York steak. By nine the place is packed and you can't hear yourself think—just as well after all that fancy hooch. Full bar. ($$$) American-Asian

WHIST *Viceroy Hotel, 1819 Ocean Ave. (310-260-7511 or www.viceroysantamonica.com). B–L–D daily; brunch Sun.* If you can get past the bouncer and the gaggle of swinging singles at the bar, you'll find yourself in a fine dining room serving assured and delicious food: foie gras, steak *tartare*, honey-coriander duck breast, smoked salmon with madras curry. The wine list is further testament to a sophisticated palate. Full bar. ($$$$) California Eclectic



MALIBU & PACIFIC PALISADES

ABUELITAS *137 S. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga (310-455-8788 or www.abuelitastopanga.com). L–D Tue.–Sun.* Windows face the mountains, a creek-side patio is perfect on warm nights, and diners come until the wee hours—the doors are open until 2 a.m. on the weekends. *Comida* includes Mexican staples as well as hearty *asada de borrego* (grilled lamb chops) with steamed spinach, family-style taco feasts, and of course, chocolate chimichangas for dessert. Saturday night there's a live band. Full bar. ($$) Mexican

ALLEGRIA *22821 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu (310-456-3132 or www.allegriamalibu.com). L–D daily.* This gracious space feels like a friend's dining room—dark wood country tables, brocade booths, exposed-brick walls, and a backlit garden terrace. Before you devour chef Antonio Muré's divine orange pie you'll want to start with the calamari *fritti* (done just so), a wood-fired pizza, or lobster-stuffed pasta in saffron sauce with asparagus tips. Beer and wine. ($) Italian

GEOFFREY'S *27400 Pacific Coast Hwy., Malibu (310-457-1519 or www.geoffreysmalibu.com). L–D daily; brunch Sat.–Sun.* This hidden terrace restaurant still feels like money hovering lazily over the ocean. Locals (rich and famous) pack the weekend brunches for corn chowder with blue crab, sautéed day boat scallops with foie gras risotto, and tempura shrimp salad. Nights are for romantics. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-Asian

GRANITA *23725 W. Malibu Rd., Malibu (310-456-0488 or www.wolfgangpuck.com). D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* After tasting Jennifer Naylor's cooking—almond-blackberry pancakes with lemon curd, morel mushroom lasagna with purple asparagus, or ahi with a spicy miso glaze and sesame crisps—at Wolfgang Puck's Malibu outpost, even the saddest souls will want to skip

their Prozac. The sorbets and granitas burst with flavor. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-Mediterranean

NOBU *Malibu Country Mart, 3835 Cross Creek Rd., Malibu (310-317-9140 or www.nobumatsuhisa.com). D nightly.* At Nobu Matsuhisa's cozy spot, ceviche is a spicy mélange of shrimp and fish marinated in lemon juice and rice vinegar; the *tiradito* is flower shaped; and the sushi and sashimi are standouts. For dessert, try broiled plums with a meringue puff and ginger ice cream. Full bar. ($$$) Japanese

SADDLE PEAK LODGE *419 Cold Canyon Rd., Calabasas (818-222-3888 or www.saddlepeaklodge.com). D Wed.–Sun.; brunch Sun.* Deer and moose heads give the three-story landmark a clubby feel, and the food is wild—literally: rack of venison, roast pheasant breast, a game tasting plate of buffalo, duck, and elk. Everything is elegant, meticulously seasoned, and expertly cooked. Full bar. ($$$) American

THE SUNSET *6800 Westward Beach Rd., Malibu (310-589-1007 or www.thesunsetrestaurant.com). D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* Euro-somethings in Rock Star baby tees, directors talking shop, and celebrities on first dates pick at Sunset tempura and carbless Kobe beef burgers at this new spot (formerly the Grey Whale) that looks onto Zuma Beach. Sit indoors or out and watch the sunset as you tuck into pinot noir–braised short ribs, Moroccan-spiced salmon roulade, and seafood risotto. Colorful Turkish lamps and rumpled cushions accent the lounge. Full bar. ($$$) Continental/Pacific Rim

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

BAZEL CAFÉ *17620 Ventura Blvd., Encino (818-728-0846). B–L–D daily.* This chic hangout is busy morning, noon, and night, but you'll never feel crowded or hurried. The waitstaff know the menu inside and out and bring enormous plates of food while world music fills the room and patio. Try the smoked salmon, steak sandwich, and chicken schnitzel. The plasma-screen TV in the ladies' loo is a nice touch. BYOB. ($$$) Mediterranean

BISTRO GARDEN AT COLDWATER *12950 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-501-0202). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* The prettiest room in the Valley is light and airy if a bit noisy. Menu highlights include poached salmon with champagne-caviar sauce and an elk chop with red cabbage and spaetzle. Full bar. ($$$) Continental

UPDATE **CA' DEL SOLE** *4100 Cahuenga Blvd., North Hollywood (818-985-4669 or www.cadelsole.com). L Sun.–Fri.; D nightly.* With its two-sided fireplace, huge patio, and slightly country club–ish feel (must be that green carpet), this is a good venue for both romantic dinners and Roman banquets. Appetizers, like the fresh chopped tuna and salmon and the terrific carpaccio, tend to upstage the entrées, which are fine in a heavy way—a 16-ounce rib eye was easily enough protein for four Atkins advocates. The Venetian-style spaghetti with clams, shrimp, and crab is a lighter choice, and for dessert, try the chocolate chip cake with fresh berries. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

CAFE BIZOU *13016 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-788-3536). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly; brunch Sat.–Sun.* There are two prominent features here: a lively French menu and very low prices. The setting is casual, reservations hard to land. Helping things along is a bring-your-own-wine, $3-per-bottle corkage policy. Full bar. ($) French

DR. HOGLY WOGLY'S TYLER TEXAS BAR-B-QUE *8136 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Van Nuys (818-780-6701). L–D daily.* Generally considered to be home of the best Texas-style barbecue in town. The brisket is worthy of being one's last meal, the beef ribs are right out of *Jurassic Park*, the sauces are more sweet than hot, and the beans are tender and vital. Beer and wine. ($) Texas Barbecue

FIREFLY *11720 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-762-1833). D Mon.–Sat.* Event planner Jeffrey Best's hot spot is of the no-sign variety—look for a vine-covered building with valets out front. The bar-lounge area is dark, with heavy books on the shelves and a crowd that gives you the once-over. The dining room is like a monastery—albeit with enormous skylights and unisex loos—and the menu is seasonal. Full bar. ($$$) French/American

MAX *13355 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-784-2935 or www.maxrestaurant.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Chef Andre Guerrero has an Asian menu with the likes of coconut-lemongrass soup, wok-sautéed filet mignon on potato-mushroom hash, and Indian coriander-crusted cod with lemon-cashew basmati rice. Beer and wine. ($$$) Cal-Asian

MR. CECIL'S CALIFORNIA RIBS *13625 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-905-8400). L–D daily.* Jonathan Burrows's second installment has an enclosed patio, a horseshoe bar, and raw wood–beamed ceilings. It's family filled, and once again, the ribs are long marinated, the fries are twice cooked in lard, and the corn bread is warm and fresh. Also at 12244 W. Pico Blvd., West L.A. (310-442-1550). Full bar. ($$) Barbecue

OLIVA *4349 Van Nuys Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-789-4490 or www.olivarestaurant.com). L–D daily.* This family-friendly trattoria serves heaping plates of pasta, a generous selection of pizzas, a roast chicken plate consisting of an entire bird, and simple grilled salmon. The tiramisu's so rich it's almost cheesecake. Full bar. ($$) Italian

PINOT BISTRO *13969 Ventura Blvd., Studio City (818-990-0500 or www.patinagroup.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Another Joachim Splichal locale, this one serves classic bistro fare: potato and artichoke terrine, French onion soup with Gruyère, seared skate wing with wilted frisée, lamb pot-au-feu, and sweetbread lasagna. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-French

SEÑOR FRED *13730 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks (818-789-3200 or www.senorfred.com). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Cave-dark lighting, shimmery wallpaper, tall banquettes,



and a sidewalk patio hung with iron chandeliers mark the food of chef Juan-Carlos Leon. It's *subrosa*: jicama, orange, papaya, and mango salad dusted with chiles; enchiladas blanketed with mole; and the best hot chocolate in the universe. Full bar. ($$) Mexican

SMOKE HOUSE *4420 Lakeside Dr., Burbank (818-845-3731). L-D daily; brunch Sun.* Here's the real Burbank studio commissary, a landmark where movers, shakers, and locals go for good, inexpensive steaks and prime rib and the best garlic cheese bread in creation. There are also heaping platters of ribs and chicken and some fine music in the bar. Full bar. ($$) American

THE STAND *17000 Ventura Blvd., Encino (818-788-2700 or www.thestandlink.com). L-D daily.* This family-friendly indoor-outdoor enterprise salutes the hot dog and its kin—premium pork, chicken, and beef sausages—with top-of-the-line fixings like fresh slaw, caramelized onions, kraut, and chili. Wash 'em down with cream soda or a root beer float. Salads are available for the rabbits among us. Beer and wine. ($) Hot Dogs

GLENDALE, PASADENA & SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

ARROYO CHOP HOUSE *536 S. Arroyo Pkwy., Pasadena (626-577-7463). D nightly.* You've got your dark wood moldings, a hearty menu, and a piano player setting the mood—so loosen your belt. Start with scallops wrapped in pancetta, then lay into a porterhouse with peppercorn-sherry cream sauce, and finish the night with some lemon bread pudding. Full bar. ($$$) Steak House

CAFFE CITRON *110 E. Lemon Ave., Monrovia (626-358-1908 or www.caffecitron.com). L-D Tue.–Sun.* This small, casual spot offers delicious pastas, risottos, salads,

DISH

Small Bites

Ludo Lefebvre, once of L'Orangerie and until recently pledged to helm a new restaurant in Westwood's W Hotel, is now ensconced at Bastide. Alain Giraud, Bastide's previous chef, is considering new options.

Steve Wallace and Bruce Marder, partners in Capo, Cora's, and the Broadway Deli, have taken over Opaline. Opaline's ex-chef Jason Travi is with Gino Angelini at his new spot, La Terza, on 3rd Street. David Rosoff, Opaline's heart and soul and the creator of its innovative wine list, is weighing other projects. Wallace and Marder have also snapped up the Beach House on West Channel Road. The new name: Brass-Cap.

Michael Cimarusti has left the Water Grill to open a restaurant in Hollywood, purportedly in the old Patina space.

Jill Davie, *chef du cuisine* at Josie, is a star of the Food Network's new show, Party Starters.

Chi, the restaurant in the Hyatt on Sunset, has a new chef in Gavin Baker, ex of Oceana in New York. The new manager is Jason Hardy of Sushi Roku.

David Wolfe, who ran the Amuse space in its Table days, will implement his new dinner menu at the Rose Café this month.

Ben Ford, Chadwick co-owner turned caterer, has a new spot in Culver City. Ford's Filling Station is scheduled to open in November.

Collin Crannell, ex of Casa Del Mar, has joined Christian Shaffer at Chloe in Playa del Rey. Crannell likes the smaller venue. "You can cook more on a love level," he says.

Wolfgang Puck is opening a steak restaurant in the Regent Beverly Wilshire. Richard Meier will design it.

Janelle Dreyfuss, wife of Richard, is behind L.A. Food Works, a West Hollywood cottage with gourmet kitchen facilities where cooking is the focus for classes, private dinners, and "team bonding."

Tibetan *goji* berries and hemp seed nuts are the latest in the antiaging arsenal at Kinara, the spa owned by Christine Splichal and Olga Lorencin-Northrup. The fatty acid-rich delicacies are served in salads.

—Margot Dougherty



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and soups. There's a gelato bar up front, and *panini* and antipasti are available for takeout, but it's worth lingering for a homey sit-down meal of fried calamari, crisp-skinned roast chicken, or grilled ahi with Tuscan-style white beans and *gremolata*. Beer and wine. ($$) Italian

CAMILO'S CALIFORNIA BISTRO *2128 Colorado Blvd., Eagle Rock (323-478-2644). B-L Tue.–Sun.; D Tue.–Sat.; brunch Sun.* Come for supreme *chilaquiles*—crispy-fried julienned tortillas topped with eggs and avocado—and some of the best tiramisu in town. In between are salads and griddle sandwiches at lunch, and sweetbreads, calamari, filet mignon, and pork chops with apples and onions at night. Beer and wine. ($$) California

CAROUSEL *304 N. Brand Blvd., Glendale (818-246-7775 or www.carouselrestaurant.com). L–D Tue.–Sun.* Conjure a big fat Mediterranean luau set in an exquisite Persian dining room and you've got the idea. Follow up tasty appetizers (*mutabbel* and *muhammara*) with piping hot shawarma, kabobs, vegetarian plates, and seafood. Weekend nights are hopping with live music, dancing, and belly dancers. Full bar. ($$) Middle Eastern

CINNABAR *933 S. Brand Blvd., Glendale (818-551-1155). D Tue.–Sun.* The exotic decor of the dining room helps you forget about the car lots outside. Then there's chef Damon Brunet's food: appetizers like yellowtail millefeuille and spicy lemongrass bouillabaisse, along with such architectural entrées as Colorado lamb chops and air-dried duck. Full bar. ($$$) Fusion

E'S WINE BAR AND RESTAURANT *115 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena (626-793-6544 or www.eswinebar.com). L Tue.–Fri; D Tue.–Sun.* Stylish wood floors and a handsome bar area set the tone for this lovely space. Sake cocktails and wine flights are house signatures, and good salads and no-fuss fresh entrées—meat, fish, pasta—are presented in generous proportions. Wine and sake. ($$) California/Italian

FIREFLY BISTRO *1009 El Centro Ave., South Pasadena (626-441-2443). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sun.* The tented patio and pom-pom topiaries make this part Arabian Nights, part spa. Go for the pecan-coated catfish, sautéed duck breast, and mint-sprinkled lamb skewers. Molten chocolate cake with caramelized bananas is lick-the-plate good. Beer and wine. ($$) American Eclectic

HALIE *1031 E. Green St., Pasadena (626-440-7067 or www.restauranthalie.com). D Tue.–Sun.* Red walls, giant gilt mirrors, and candlelight give this bar-lounge-restaurant that lovin' feeling. It's set in the historic Cheesewright building, where Einstein worked in the '40s. Food includes tuna *tartare* with wasabi caviar, paper-thin pizzas with pepper brioche, porcini-dusted halibut, and dry-aged rib eye. Full bar. ($$$) California

MADRE'S *897 Granite Dr., Pasadena (626-744-0900). L–D daily.* Play the CDs, see the movies, wear the lingerie, and now, eat the food. J.Lo's got a Cuban restaurant with feminine interiors grounded by dark wood floors and overseen by mismatched chandeliers. The menu is hearty—pork, chicken, and beef; fried bananas; rice and beans—and secondary to the SRO scene. Full bar. ($$$) Cuban

MAISON AKIRA *713 E. Green St., Pasadena (626-796-9101). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sun.* The best of Paris and Tokyo are melded in dishes like seared foie gras with port wine–truffle sauce or grilled sea bass in lemon-honey dressing. The mixed berry *feuilleté* could be the work of a five-star patisserie. Beer and wine. ($$$) French-Japanese

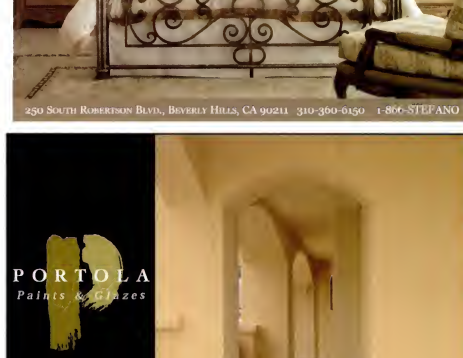
PARKWAY GRILL *510 S. Arroyo Pkwy., Pasadena (626-795-1001). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* After 18 years, this is still the jewel in the Smith brothers' crown (Smitty's Grill, Crocodile Café, Arroyo Chop House). The room's sophisticated, the servers are delightful, and the food's creative, not wacky. Hot cheese-pear-walnut flatbread is mandatory; then try beet salad, black linguini with shrimp, mesquite-grilled filet mignon, or anything else you see. Full bar. ($$$) American

THE RAYMOND *1250 S. Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena (626-441-3136). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.; brunch Sat.–Sun.* One of our most romantic spots is housed in an understated restored bungalow with fireplaces and gardens. For starters try the figs, fresh from the restaurant's tree,

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wrapped in pancetta. Entrées include succulent rack of lamb with Grand Marnier sauce. Full bar. ($$$) American

RESTAURANT DEVON *109 E. Lemon Ave., Monrovia (626-305-0013). L. Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.* Ask for a booth at this standard-bearer in Old Monrovia, where the food ranges from sashimi to black bear ravioli, from calf's liver with capers to caribou medallions. For dessert, crème brûlée in phyllo. Beer and wine. ($$$) Cal-French

SALADANG SONG *383 S. Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena (626-793-5200). B-L-D daily.* Tired of the same ol', same ol' breakfast? Why not pearly rice soup with ginger and chicken, or shimmering tofu in a sweet-and-tangy syrup? Have it on the terrace of this popular Thai-tech outpost. Later, it's about grilled calamari, fish cakes steamed in a banana leaf, or a feisty noodle soup. Beer and wine. ($$) Thai

SHIRO *1505 Mission St., South Pasadena (626-799-4774 or www.restaurantshiro.com). D Tue.–Sun.* The specialty here is catfish in ponzu sauce, but a good alternative is peppered tuna—or anything else you see. We love the blueberry and pear wontons for dessert. Beer and wine. ($$) French-Japanese

TRATTORIA TRE VENEZIE *119 W. Green St., Pasadena (626-795-4455). L Tue.–Fri.; D Tue.–Sun.* This quaint restaurant has books on its shelves and framed family photos on the walls. All pastas, including spinach and ricotta gnocchi and ravioli stuffed with red beets and ricotta, are made fresh daily, and the *crema del gondoliere*, flavored with caramelized sugar and toasted ground almonds, is the perfect *dolci*. Full bar. ($$$) Northern Italian

XIOMARA *69 N. Raymond Ave., Pasadena (626-796-2520 or www.xiomararestaurant.com). L. Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Serving *pollano* risotto with tomatillo, cilantro, and lime juice; *nuevo cubano* chicken *patacones*; spicy duck *ropa vieja*, and mini flans flavored with *guayaba*, *mamey*, and *guanabana*, Xiomara Ardolina's sleek place is the premier Left Coast spot for nuevo latino. Full bar. ($$) French/Latin

YUJEAN KANG'S *67 N. Raymond Ave., Pasadena (626-585-0850). L-D daily.* A Chinese restaurant like no other: One soup is topped with meringue in which a small village scene is drawn, prawns are stir-fried with fava beans, and polenta is cooked Chinese style. Kang even makes a mean cheesecake. Also at South Coast Plaza, 3333 Bristol St., Costa Mesa (714-662-1098). Beer and wine. ($$) Chinese

ZEKE'S SMOKEHOUSE *2209 Honolulu Ave., Montrose (818-957-7043). L-D daily.* Michael Rosen, ex of Reign, and Leonard Schwartz of Maple Drive are behind this bright place where everyone seems to know each other and the spanking clean kitchen is proudly on view. Ribs—meaty, high quality, and just off the grill—are the name of the game, but chicken, chili, pulled-pork sandwiches, and kettle chips are other prime reasons to eat in or take out. Beer and wine. ($$) Barbecue

SOUTH BAY

AIMEE'S *800 S. Pacific Coast Hwy., Redondo Beach (310-316-1081). D Tue.–Sun.* You're a stranger at Aimee Mizrahi's chic bistro only once. She'll remember you loved the seared scallop with polenta appetizer and that you followed it with potato-crusted halibut and Gorgonzola mashed. Before saying *bonne nuit*, indulge with apple galette or crème brûlée. Beer and wine. ($) French

BELMONT BREWING CO. *25 39th Pl., Long Beach (562-433-3891). B Sat.–Sun.; L-D daily.* One of the best of the local brew pubs, unique not only for delicious beer but also for suds-friendly dishes: pizza, pasta, salads, burgers, steak, and fish. Its location on the Belmont Pier affords a fine view. Beer and wine. ($) California

CAFÉ PIERRE *317 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan Beach (310-545-2323). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Forget any laid-back beach-town vibes. This bistro dishes out French arrogance with the best of them, along with surprisingly creative cuisine, such as pumpkin ravioli in basil cream sauce. Full bar. ($$) Cal-French

CHRISTY'S *3937 E. Broadway Ave., Long Beach (562-433-7133). L Mon.–Fri.; D nightly.* Christy (daughter of Sonny) Bono's gem in Belmont Heights offers delicious eats: tender osso buco, sea bass with orange-ginger vinaigrette, and for the finale, cappuccino crème brûlée or chocolate-banana bread pudding. Full bar. ($$$) Italian

MICHI *903 Manhattan Ave., Manhattan Beach (310-376-0633). D Mon.–Sat.* This upmarket eatery with a sushi bar is in a setting so spacious you can't even eavesdrop on the next table. Stroll in for the Gorgonzola rib eye, and stroll out content. Full bar. ($$$) Fusion

NICO'S *5760 E. 2nd St., Long Beach (562-434-4479 or www.nicosrestaurant.com). D nightly.* Christy Bono's two-tiered spot is SRO. Escargots, pan-seared pork loin with figs, and sautéed jumbo prawns are all worth a try. The chocolate pavé—a brick of dark chocolate mousse drizzled with crème de cassis—is mandatory. Beer and wine. ($$$) Continental

TRIO BY THE BAY *304 12th St., Manhattan Beach (310-546-8786). D Wed.–Sat.* A great-looking bar crowd and smart bartenders are the hallmarks here. Seared scallops come with a crispy potato-leek pancake; the brochette platter for two is done just so. Tuesday is Brazilian night, where the music heats up and $25 platters of nibbles sit in the middle of tables. Full bar. ($$$) Cal-Mediterranean

ZAZOU *1810 S. Catalina Ave., Redondo Beach (310-540-4828). L Tue.–Sat.; D nightly.* The name means "stylishly hip" in French, which translates here to cuisine from Tuscany and Provence as well as Morocco and Southern California. Roasted vegetables come with spicy couscous, and the carrot gnocchi and fish dishes are hard to beat. Full bar. ($$) French/Mediterranean **LA**

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1700 Ocean Avenue, Santa Monica (310) 576-3180

LUNA PARK

Enjoy the eclectic atmosphere and sidewalk seating of our popular neighborhood restaurant, featuring big French toast, truffled poached eggs, made-to-order Bloody Marys, and a full lunch menu! Come try our great food, fun atmosphere, and reasonable prices!

LUNA PARK KITCHEN + COCKTAILS

Saturday and Sunday, 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

672 South La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles (323) 934-2110

TIVOLI CAFÉ

In the heart of Pacific Palisades, Tivoli has been tantalizing taste buds for more than 15 years. Brunch choices include fresh berry crepes, white chocolate chip pancakes, and seafood omelettes. Soak up the beautiful weather while sipping your complimentary coffee on the spacious patio or dive into mimosas made with fresh squeezed orange juice. Kid friendly.

Saturday and Sunday, 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m.

15306 Sunset Boulevard, Pacific Palisades (310) 459-7685

Do you offer Brunch? Call Shannon Stein at (323) 801-0018 to participate in the Brunch Guide

LOS ANGELES RESTAURANT GUIDE



LOS ANGELES RESTAURANT GUIDE



BEVERLY HILLS
DaPasquale
Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills
Il Gelo

DOWNTOWN
Checkers Downtown
Gio Trattoria
Cicada
Noé
Tesoro Trattoria

HOLLYWOOD/MELROSE
Chan Dara
Dar Maghreb
Kabuki
The Musso & Frank Grill
Oasis

LA CIENEGA/ WEST HOLLYWOOD
Buddha's Belly
The Gardens of Taxco
Madeo Ristorante
Michelia Nouvelle Vietnamese Bistro
Mix Restaurant
Quality
'Y' Tea and Wine

MARINA DEL REY/WESTCHESTER
The Buggy Whip
Chan Darette
Kabuki

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY
Kabuki
Oliva

SANTA MONICA/BRENTWOOD
The Lobster
Pane Fresca
Patty's Pizza Take and Bake

WEST L.A./WESTWOOD
Chan Dara
Maria's Italian Kitchen
Napa Valley Grille



BUDDHA'S BELLY

7475 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles 323-931-8588 www.bbfood.com

Good Food. Good Fortune. Feast on the tantalizing pan-Asian creations of Chef Hisashi Yoshiara, featuring authentic flavors of Japan, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Korea, and Singapore. Watch our chefs prepare fresh, healthy Asian cuisine in our open display kitchen. Enjoy wholesome noodle dishes, fresh salads, tantalizing appetizers, savory entrées, and tasty desserts with friendly, knowledgeable service. Specialty cocktails, wines, Asian beers, sakes and herbal tonics. We accept reservations for large parties only (six or more) and offer a private dining room for up to 50. Open daily for lunch and dinner.



THE BUGGY WHIP

7420 La Tijera Boulevard, Los Angeles 310-645-7131

Established 57 years ago, the Buggy Whip, long a stopover for celebrities and sports figures, was acclaimed by Los Angeles magazine as "Best Steak Dinner" in 2003 and is also renowned for Florida stone crab claws, full bone prime rib, and giant lobster tail. Owned and operated by Paul and Ilze Damicarere, the Buggy Whip stands as a testament to what Old World dining is really all about. Live piano Wednesday through Saturday. Private banquet facility available.



CHAN DARA

11940 West Pico Boulevard, West Los Angeles 310-479-4461
310 North Larchmont Boulevard, Los Angeles 323-467-1052
13490 Maxella Avenue, Marina del Rey 310-301-1004

Known for its authentic Thai cuisine, Chan Dara has successfully fused the beauty and exotic flavors of Thailand with the energy and eclectic atmosphere of Los Angeles for more than 15 years. Chan Dara is the ideal place to eat and drink with friends after work or a fun place to socialize in the evening. Come visit us at any one of our three locations. Lunch daily.



CHECKERS DOWNTOWN

535 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 800-423-9057 www.hiltoncheckers.com

Gourmet magazine ranks Checkers Downtown restaurant #7 of the top 20 restaurants in Los Angeles. *L.A. Epicurean Rendezvous* raves about Checkers Downtown "dynamic, inventive, modern American cooking." Checkers Downtown features California fusion cuisine with distinctive European, American, and Asian influences, served superbly in quiet, elegant surroundings. A renowned Sunday brunch and preshow dinner packages that include transportation to and from the theater are offered. Breakfast daily from 6:30 to 10:30 a.m., lunch daily from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and dinner Tue.–Sat. from 5:30 to 9 p.m.



CIAO TRATTORIA

815 West 7th Street, Los Angeles 213-624-2244 www.ciaotrattoria.com

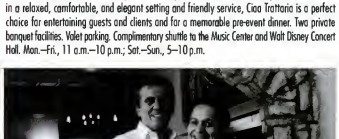
"The food is so good you'll overeat, but you'll have a smile on your face." *–Zagat Survey*
This charming trattoria has been a favorite among the Music Center's patrons year after year and now is also the favorite of the Staples Center's sports fans. Known for its superb Italian cuisine in a relaxed, comfortable, and elegant setting and friendly service, Ciao Trattoria is a perfect choice for entertaining guests and clients and for a memorable pre-event dinner. Two private banquet facilities. Valet parking. Complimentary shuttle to the Music Center and Walt Disney Concert Hall. Mon.–Fri., 11 a.m.–10 p.m.; Sat.–Sun., 5–10 p.m.



CICADA

617 South Olive Street, Los Angeles 213-488-9488 www.cicadarestaurant.com

Cicada is Los Angeles' famed destination where haute couture meets haute cuisine. Situated in a 1928 art deco haberdashery complete with Lalique glass featuring the finest contemporary Italian cuisine. Specialties include filet mignon with foie gras and green apples in a cabernet sauce. Cicada has won the Zagat award for Best Decor for 2004 and the *Wine Spectator* Award of Excellence for the last seven years. Ideal for special events. Major credit cards, valet, and complimentary theater shuttle. Lunch: Mon.–Fri., 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Dinner: Mon. – Sat., beginning at 5:30 p.m.



DA PASQUALE

9749 Santa Monica Boulevard, Beverly Hills 310-859-3884

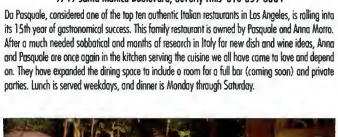
Da Pasquale, considered one of the top ten authentic Italian restaurants in Los Angeles, is rolling into its 15th year of gastronomical success. This family restaurant is owned by Pasquale and Anna Morro. After a much needed sabbatical and months of research in Italy for new dish and wine ideas, Anna and Pasquale are once again in the kitchen serving the cuisine we all have come to love and depend on. They have expanded the dining space to include a room for a full bar (coming soon) and private parties. Lunch is served weekdays, and dinner is Monday through Saturday.



DAR MAGHREB

7651 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles 323-876-7651

Visit this re-created 15th-century Moroccan palace, where you will dine in the traditional Moroccan manner. There is a bubbling fountain, open courtyard, and two exquisite dining rooms. After having your hands washed at the table, lounge on sofas and partake of the multicourse feast. Watch the belly dancer swirl around the room as you sip mint tea. Open for dinner 7 days a week. Special luncheons may be arranged for parties of 15 or more. Reservations advised. Ask about our Gala New Year's Eve Party.



FOUR SEASONS HOTEL LOS ANGELES AT BEVERLY HILLS

300 South Doheny Drive, Los Angeles www.fourseasons.com/losangeles

Gardens Restaurant, Four Seasons Hotel's award-winning fine dining room, is located lobby level and has a private entrance accessed from the hotel driveway. Executive chef Canny Andersson brings a sophisticated edge to Cal-Med cuisine, especially the roasted Mediterranean "Langoustines" with cinnamon, lamb carpaccio with goat cheese and basil oil, poussin cooked three ways, and rack of lamb with cocoa bean puree.



THE GARDENS OF TAXCO

1113 North Harper Avenue, West Hollywood 323-654-1746

Since 1971, the Gardens of Taxco has built its reputation on consistently providing the best Mexico City–style cuisine in Los Angeles. Your unique five-course dining experience begins when your menu is presented verbally, combining details about the entrées with colorful signature sayings such as "born in the sauce" and "nat hat, spicy." The understated décor and festive atmosphere will transport you to a fine home in Mexico City.



IL CIELO

9018 Burton Way, Beverly Hills, (310) 276-9990 www.ilcielo.com

The "most romantic restaurant in Los Angeles" says *Los Angeles* magazine. Surrounded by lush landscaping with open sky overhead, guests can enjoy courtyard dining under the stars or indoors by the fireplace. Specialties include whole striped sea bass, stuffed with fresh herbs; homemade ravioli with roasted eggplant and goat cheese; and rose petal crème brûlée. With the appearance of a private home in Sorrento, Il Cielo specializes in country weddings and private parties. Steps away from the Four Seasons Hotel. All major credit cards. Valet parking. Lunch: Mon–Sat. from 11:30am to 3pm. Dinner: Mon–Sat from 5:30pm to 11pm.



KABUKI

Cerritos 562-467-8003, Hollywood 323-464-6003, Hughes Center 310-641-5524, Pasadena 626-351-8963, Woodland Hills 818-704-8700 www.kabukirestaurants.com

KABUKI is an award-winning Japanese Restaurant known by many as the "Best Sushi in Town" since 1980. An exquisite interior features an extensive sushi bar, full bar, and spacious seating in a contemporary atmosphere. Start your meal with a delicious appetizer such as Ginger Shrimp, Tuna Tartare, Salmon Carpaccio, Calamari Stuffed Eggplant, or any of our fabulous salads. Come visit us at our newest Hollywood location!



THE LOBSTER

1602 Ocean Avenue, Santa Monica 310-458-9294 www.thelobster.com

Find yourself swept away by the 180-degree breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean while feasting on one of many tantalizing seafood dishes, including our world-famous whole live Maine lobster. Since 1923, The Lobster has become a tradition passed from generation to generation. Come follow the tradition. Soak in fresh coastal breezes, witness spectacular sunsets, and enjoy the delectable seafood creations of chef Allyson Thurber. Lunch and dinner. 7 days a week.



MADEO RISTORANTE

8897 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles 310-859-4903

Se siete a "Farte dei Marmi" di sicura davete andare al Madai e se siete qui a Los Angeles, perche' non venite a trovarci. Serviamo il pranzo dal lunedi al venerdi Dalle 12pm alle 3pm e la cena tutte le Sere dalle 6pm alle 11pm. Fra I nostri piatti troverete il risatto ai porcini, gli spaghetti alla battarga, la fiorentina alla griglia gli scampi al farno. A presto e buon appetito.



MARIA'S ITALIAN KITCHEN

10761 Pico Boulevard, West Los Angeles 310-441-3663 www.mariasitaliankitchen.com

Maria's Italian Kitchen is the place to go for great food in a fun and friendly setting. Whether you want a romantic dinner for two, a great meal with good friends, or a family affair, Maria's has something everyone will enjoy – like our classic Italian pastas and pizzas, or our new salads and seafood. For lunch, dinner, or just drinks and dessert, you're going to love Maria's! Takeout and catering are available. Sun.–Thurs., 11:30 a.m.– 10 p.m.; Fri.–Sat., 11:30 a.m. –11 p.m.



MICHELIA NOUVELLE VIETNAMESE BISTRO

8738 West 3rd Street, Los Angeles 310-276-8288

A small but exquisite restaurant, Michelia specializes in nouvelle Vietnamese cuisine, combining the flavors of Asia with a classical elegance. *Zagat Survey* called it "a lovely, serene, neighborhood spot with reasonably priced, artfully presented, amazingly tasty dishes." According to food critic Joy Weston, "Michelia is a stunning, smart, and utterly delightful addition to our restaurant scene." Mon.-Fri., 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; Mon.-Thurs., 5:30-10 p.m.; Fri.-Sat., 5:30-10:30 p.m.



MIX RESTAURANT

1114 N. Crescent Heights Blvd.,West Hollywood 323-650-4649

"...Where Cap Ferrat meets Cape Cod meets Capri." Daily Candy.com

Où la cuisine est sublime, La vie est belle Et, les gens sont (toujours) chics.

Where the food is great, Life is good And, people are chic (still).

Dove la cucina è buonissima, La vita è dolce E, la gente è (ancora) chic...and cataplana is Portugese...

Lunch, Tu-F, 11a.m.-3p.m. Dinner, Tu-Sat, 6p.m.-1a.m. Sunday Brunch, 11a.m.-3:30 p.m.



THE MUSSO & FRANK GRILL

6667 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood 323-467-7788 323-467-5123

The oldest restaurant in Hollywood since 1919. It's the kind of place people return to again and again for the comfortable ambience, superb service, and consistently excellent food that they have been turning out for more than 85 years, along with the martini against which all others must be judged. Pure Raymond Chandler! If you haven't been to Musso's, you haven't been to Hollywood.



NAPA VALLEY GRILLE

Westwood Center, 1100 Glendon Avenue, Los Angeles 310-824-3322

Enjoy wine country cuisine in an atmosphere that evokes the visual bounty and romantic heritage of the Napa Valley. With a collection of more than 400 premium California wines, at least 40 served by the glass, this restaurant is an ideal place for wine enthusiasts. The seasonal menu offerings include a vast selection of artisan cheeses, vineyard tapas, ahi ceviche, and shaved baby artichoke salad. Prime steaks, poached wild bass, and lavender-mustard chicken can be had, as well as farmer's market fresh fruits and vegetables. The house-made desserts include a peach shortcake and vanilla-honey panna cotta. Patio dining, valet parking, banquet facilities, and off-site catering available. Open for lunch, dinner, and Sunday brunch.



NOÉ RESTAURANT & BAR

251 S. Olive Street, Los Angeles 213-356-4100 www.omnilosangeles.com

Located downtown in the luxurious Omni Los Angeles Hotel, chef Robert Gadsby's Noé offers destination diners progressive American cuisine with gentle touches of Japanese aesthetic. From its welcoming interior design to the beautiful outdoor patio overlooking California Plaza, Noé has been designed to leave lasting impressions. As the Frank Gehry–designed Walt Disney Concert Hall focuses worldwide attention on Downtown Los Angeles, Noé is poised to elevate the culinary landscape of this reinvigorated area.



OASIS

611 North La Brea Avenue, Los Angeles 323-939-8900

Oasis takes its visual and culinary inspiration from "The Thousand and One Nights" and was eloquently described as a "psychedelic riff on the idea of Morocco" (S. Irene Virbila, *Los Angeles Times*). The menu is Mediterranean and Moorish in inspiration. The wine list is eclectic and influenced by the "old world". Seating options include: outdoor patio, Tapas bar and lounge and dining room. The Vault and Cobra Room are private and can be reserved upon request. Mon–Sat. from 6pm to midnight.



OLIVA TRATTORIA

4449 Van Nuys Boulevard, Sherman Oaks 818-789-4490 www.olivarestaurant.com

A cozy neighborhood Italian trattoria with authentic Italian food. Warm atmosphere, friendly staff, reasonably priced healthy food. Must try: Burrata: creamy mozzarella, pear gorgonzola with walnut salad, pasta with Maine lobster, egg fettuccini with mixed wild mushrooms, ciappino, branzino: Mediterranean Sea Bass, N.Y. steak "Tagliata" with arrugula and shaved parmesan cheese, ricotta cheesecake. Open Monday - Friday: lunch. Open 7 nights: dinner.



PANE FRESCO

13050 San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles 310-587-0772

This quaint restaurant in the heart of Brentwood is a fresh alternative to traditional Italian cuisine. Pane Fresca offers a variety of dishes, including the homemade panini, white chocolate chip pancakes, and specialized pastas. Pane's outdoor heated patios, aided by live music on Friday and Saturday nights, gives this restaurant its eclectic charm. That combined with the chef's evening specials assures sheer indulgence. The patios also offer the perfect ambience for private parties. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily, with takeout, delivery, and catering.



PATTY'S PIZZA TAKE AND BAKE

625 Montana Avenue Suite D, Santa Monica 310-576-6616

Experience the best in take and bake gourmet pizzas! Homemade dough and sauces, plus over 30 toppings offers you one of the best pizzas you've ever experienced. Rated one of the Top Pizza Restaurants in U.S.A., Merril Shindler, *AM LA*–Best Pizza Dough in LA. So don't forget to call ahead and we'll have your order ready and waiting. Wan Chef's Taste Award for 1999 and 2004.



QUALITY

8030 West 3rd Street, Los Angeles 323-658-5959

Quality food & beverage restaurant proudly celebrates its 10th anniversary in L.A. this year. Quality is a breakfast, lunch, and brunch place, that continues to be a favorite hangout for locals, artists, and business execs. It satisfies the American obsession for great healthy dishes by allowing flavors to speak for themselves. Try corn beef hash, crab benedict, challah French toast, or curried chicken salad and warm salmon and asparagus mushroom salad. Breakfast and lunch served all day every day, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Reservations not required.



TESORO TRATTORIA

300 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles 213-680-0000 www.tesoratrattoria.com

Awarded Best Italian Restaurant 1998-2000 and Best Service 1999 by *Downtown News*. "Perfect for an intimate meal or business luncheon," *Zagat* 2003, Tesoro Trattoria prepares the finest in Tuscan cuisine. Start off a truly memorable evening with a selection from our award-winning wine list and complete it with one of our sumptuous desserts. Located in the beautiful spiral water court adjacent to the Museum of Contemporary Art. Valet or self-parking. Complimentary parking and shuttle to and from the Music Center. Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sat., 5-10 p.m.



't' TEA & WINE

870 Huntley Drive, West Hollywood
(On Santa Monica Boulevard, a little west of La Cienega Boulevard)
310-652-0150 www.teaandwine.com

A hip and cozy atmosphere. t serves high tea with light, healthy items. Our English-style high tea includes finger sandwiches, scones, and pastries. For those who are looking for a wholesome meal, t's lunch and dinner menu includes a selection of salads and a variety of hot dishes. For the savvy wine drinkers, t's extensive wine list offers imported organic wine from Europe and the finest cheeses in town. Open daily from 10 a.m. to midnight.



1.800.ACS.2345 / www.cancer.org
Hope.Progress.Answers.

California Spirit xx

We, the volunteers and staff of the American Cancer Society, are in the business of saving lives. We are motivated both by the enduring promise of a cancer-free world and the persistent tragedy of lives interrupted and lost to the disease.

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of California Spirit, our annual gourmet gala, a special thank you to the Committee and those who have worked diligently for the past two decades to raise funds to support the mission of the Society.

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WOLFGANG PUCK
SHERRY LANSING
BARBARA LAZAROFF

CO-CHAIRS
DONANNE KASIKCI
SUSAN WALERSTEIN

"SPIRIT OF LIFE" AWARDEE
JOHN BATTER
VP & Group General Manager, Electronic Arts

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BONNY DOON VINEYARD, Santa Cruz, CA
FERRARI-CARANO, Healdsburg, CA
JUSTIN WINERY, Paso Robles, CA
LANDMARK WINERY, Kenwood, CA
NIEBAUM-COPPOLA, Rutherford, CA
PATTERNO WINES INTERNATIONAL
PETER FRANUS, Napa, CA
PRESIDIO WINERY, Lompoc, CA
QUPÉ WINE CELLARS, Santa Maria, CA
ROSENTHAL, The Malibu Estate, Malibu, CA
SOLOROSA, Sonoma County, CA
TESTAROSSA VINEYARDS, Los Gatos, CA

PARTICIPATING CHEFS
GINO ANGELINI
Angelini Osteria

BILL BRACKEN
The Belvedere at The Peninsula Beverly Hills

ALAIN GIRAUD
Bastide

LUIS DIAZ
Chinois on Main

JENNIFER NAYLOR
Granita

JOSIE LE BALCH
Josie

SUZANNE GOIN
Lucques

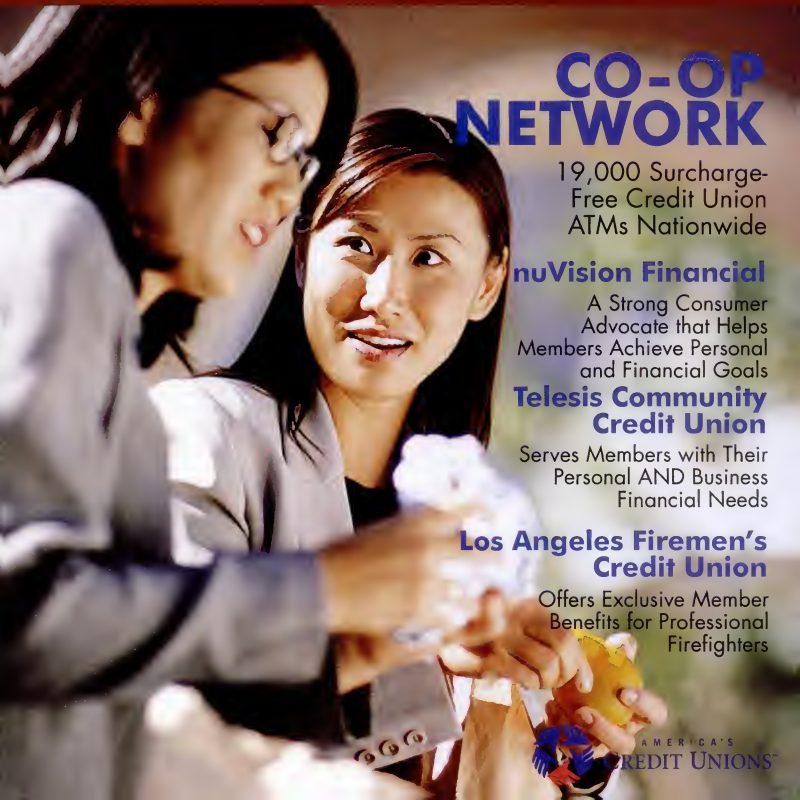
NOBU MATSUHISA
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Telesis Community Credit Union

Serves Members with Their Personal AND Business Financial Needs

Los Angeles Firemen's Credit Union

Offers Exclusive Member Benefits for Professional Firefighters

AMERICA'S CREDIT UNIONS™

If you refuse to pay "retail" when you shop– why would you pay "retail" when you bank?

Low cost loans, high yield savings, and quality services like coast-to-coast surcharge-free ATM access are available to you at a credit union.

BY KRISTIN WITZENBURG

THE FATHER OF THE CREDIT UNION MOVEMENT EDWARD A. FILENE WAS A PIONEER IN CREATING "Bests" that have shaped our commerce and community today. He invented discount retail shopping (Filene's). He was an ingenious businessman that began profitsharing plans for his employees, established minimum wages for female workers, and advocated a five-day, 40-hour work week – all in the early 20th century, well before these concepts were common. He was one of the founders of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Filene poured over a million dollars of his own money into the creation of the credit union movement. By 1925, 15 states had passed credit union laws; 419 credit unions were serving 108,000 members. Today, some 67.4 million Americans are credit union members. Filene obviously thought that people with good jobs, good access to financial services, and a strong local business culture led to a healthy economy in which his businesses would thrive.

The Spirit is Alive Today with CO-OP Network

Credit Unions live the cooperative spirit with each other as well as with their members, and nowhere is this more evident than with **CO-OP Network** – the national credit union ATM network. Owned by credit unions, CO-OP Network provides over 19,000 surcharge-free ATMs around the country for the members





of its credit unions. That's a larger ATM network than even the largest bank.

Pull your ATM or Debit Card out of your wallet. If it has the CO-OP Network symbol on it, you too can take advantage of this network of convenience. If not, join a credit union today and realize a better way to bank! All the credit unions in this special section are CO-OP Network members, and any one of them will give you the hometown convenience with nationwide access that you want.

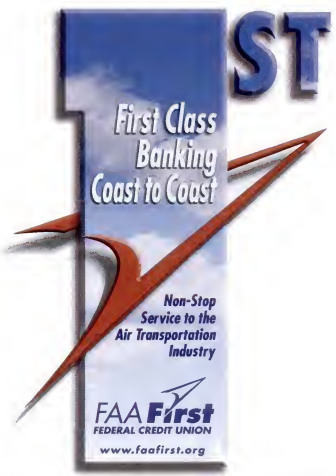
"Credit unions have been recognized by Wall Street Journal, Bankrate.com, and hundreds of other news sources as not-for-profit banking alternatives that offer better interest rates on loans and deposits than at many banks. CO-OP Network gives credit union members even more ATM convenience than the largest bank," says Robert Rose, CEO, CO-OP Network.

Fast Growth a Result of Service Focus

Credit Unions are growing so fast because consumers who discover the benefits tell their friends – and word of mouth is one of the biggest contributors to growth.

nuVision Financial Federal Credit Union in Southern California, for example, was recently named a "Champion of Industry" by Pat Summerall Productions and featured on a national news network. "Our focus is on placing staff on the front line who are fully trained and licensed to meet the entire range of consumers' financial needs," says Kerry Lewis, Vice President and Chief Planning and Development Officer for nuVision Financial. "This is the best way to provide a comprehensive educational and financial package





to help members achieve their personal and financial goals."

nuVision Financial members are eligible for a complimentary consultation to review their entire financial picture and get their recommendations for a balanced, diversified and healthy financial future.

nuVision Financial is also a strong consumer advocate, affiliated with the American Consumer Council (ACC). Members of the ACC and nuVision Financial receive a quarterly newsletter: "The Aware Consumer," with content supplied by consumer advocate David Horowitz, a multiple Emmy winner for "FightBack!" TV and radio shows. Membership is widely open to anyone.

Unique Services for Performers

AFTRA-SAG Federal Credit Union serves the substantial community of performers in Los Angeles. Their lending practices treat self-employed applicants no differently than those who collect a paycheck from one single employer. So all members can go through the loon application process with confidence. While they offer unique full-service products and services exclusively to their members, AFTRA-SAG FCU believes the proof is in their standard products such as credit cards: because they know members often need a bridge over cash flow dips, they charge the same incredibly low rates on cash advances as purchases.

First Class, Coast to Coast

From the tower to the cockpit to the gate, **FAA First Federal Credit Union** is the premier financial institution serving the air transportation industry. FAA First specializes in electronic, remote account access, which serves this mobile industry better than traditional 9 to 5 branches. FAA First supplements its "First Class" online services with nearly 20,000 nationwide surcharge-free ATM and shared branching locations, available to flight crews wherever they land. "Above all else, we provide financial peace of mind to those who transport America safely through the skies," says Eileen Rivera, President/CEO.

HELOCs Up to $500,000

Southland Credit Union members always find a helpful representative, great rates and excellent products. This full service focus is evident in Southland's current Summertime Dreams promotion, which includes a no-fee or low-rate home equity line of credit with lines up to $500,000 – and both come with a free Southland checking account. Southland's free checking account isn't your run of the mill free checking either. It comes with a full suite of eServices, begins earning a very attractive interest rate at only $750 average balance, comes with two free boxes of custom checks every calendar year and overdraft protection (subject to credit approval).

Zero Down Home Loans

Escalating home prices in Orange County have put the dream of home





ownership out of reach for many first-time buyers. A 10% down payment and closing costs for an average-priced home in Orange County can now exceed $50,000. Serving all of Orange County, **American First Credit Union** recognizes this challenge and recently enhanced its Zero Down Home Loan program to allow buyers to borrow up to $600,000 with no down payment. As a direct lender, American First offers highly competitive rates and flexible underwriting, including stated income loans. The credit union has six convenient Orange County branches.

Secure Finances for Firemen

Since 1935, **Los Angeles Firemen's Credit Union** has provided a secure financial environment for the brave men and women of California's Fire Departments. As one of the largest credit unions exclusively serving the financial needs of firefighters and their families, LAFCU has a proud tradition of service, reliability, and strength.

With a full-range of financial products and services, financial strength is evident in a tradition of returning a portion of the net profits back to members in the form of Extraordinary Dividend Bonuses and Interest Refunds. Unique in the financial industry, these additional payouts continue to set Los Angeles Firemen's Credit Union apart as a member-owned financial institution where member/owners share financially in their Credit Union's success.

Los Angeles Firemen's Credit Union's strategic goal remains steadfast - to improve the financial well-being of member/owners in an environment of integrity, safety, and soundness.

Membership is available to California firefighting professionals and their families. To learn more about Los Angeles Firemen's Credit Union and to request a membership packet, visit www.lafirecu.org or call (800) 231-1626.

Business Services Provided

Telesis Community Credit Union, a full service, not-for-profit financial institution, serves residents and businesses in Ventura and Los Angeles Counties and the surrounding community. Telesis offers low or no fee products, services, accounts and loans for consumers and businesses. Services are designed to provide members with greater flexibility and financial value.

Telesis has nine branches: Chatsworth (main office), Camarillo, Westlake Village, Simi Valley (two branches), Van Nuys, Canyon Country and Valencia. Telesis also is a member of the CO-OP Network, giving members nationwide ATM access, and CU Service Centers, where credit union members can go to participating credit unions to conduct transactions on their Telesis account(s).

Members have turned to Telesis Community Credit Union for their personal financial needs. As some member-owners have started their own business,

We Keep Good Company

LOS ANGELES FIREMEN'S CREDIT UNION



Shouldn't You?



To learn how LAFCU can benefit you or to receive a membership kit, visit us at **www.lafirecu.org** or call us at **(800) 231-1626.**

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Savings – Loans – Mortgages – Investments – Financial Planning
FREE Online Banking/Bill Pay – Exceptional "Fire Family" Service – *and More!*

And unique among financial institutions, a portion of LAFCU's net profits are returned to members in the form of *Interest Refunds* and *Extraordinary Dividend Bonuses.**

* At the discretion of the LAFCU Board of Directors, members with a loan account may receive a portion of their interest paid on their loan in the form of an Interest Refund at year-end. For Extraordinary Dividend Bonuses, members may receive an additional dividend bonus on top of the dividends already earned. Interest Refunds and Extraordinary Dividend Bonuses are paid at year-end.

LOS ANGELES FIREMEN'S CREDIT UNION
1520 West Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, California 91105
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EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

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GUIDE

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FILM & MUSIC

BY THE GRACE OF HER HEART

Filmmaker and fest impresario Allison Anders goes full-tilt boogie at her 2ND ANNUAL DON'T KNOCK THE ROCK MUSIC AND FILM FESTIVAL. John Doe blasts on opening night, Michael Apted's in the house for a screening of his flick *Stardust*, and PJ Harvey brings you her love at the closing concert. Michael Des Barres emcees all of the above and more. Aug. 12–15. Visit www.dontknocktherock.com.

ILLUSTRATION BY **MARK ULRIKSEN**

TOP TEN



1 HEARTLAND: PAINTINGS BY BO BARTLETT, 1978–2002

THROUGH AUG. 22. Bartlett's figurative paintings are rich with spiritual symbolism (stemming from his early desire to become a preacher) and surreal cinematic tableaux (inspired by his film-making studies at New York University). Santa Barbara Museum of Art, 1130 State St., Santa Barbara, 805-963-4364.

2 UNIVERSOUL CIRCUS: SOUL IN THE CITY TOUR

OPENS AUG. 17. The only African American–owned circus—often called the "Hip Hop Big Top"—sports the contortionists of Twisted Sistas, the stilt walkers of Caribbean Flava, and the gospel music of Patrice Lovely. Call for times. Tickets, $10–$29. Aug. 17–22: Pomona Fairplex, 1101 W. McKinley Ave., Gate 14, Pomona. Aug. 25–Sept. 6: Forum parking lot, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd., Inglewood. Visit www.ticketmaster.com.

3 BEST OF L.A.® 2004

AUG. 11. Host Steve Edwards and 2,000 on the town partake of Los Angeles magazine's gourmet spread. (Proceeds benefit Leeza's Place and the Alzheimer's Association.) 7–10. Tickets, $100. Pacific Design Center, 8687 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood, 866-468-3399.



4 REI AOO'S DANCE PLANET & SATORI DAIKO

AUG. 28. Rei Aoo's dance troupe and the Reverend Tom Kurai's drummers present the U.S. premiere of *Origins*, in which dancers undulate like cilia to the thunder of *taiko* drums and other traditional Japanese instruments. At 8. Tickets, $12–$25. Ford Amphitheater, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood, 323-GO-1-FORD.

5 RICHARD NEUTRA'S VDL RESEARCH HOUSE II

CONTINUING. Models, drawings, and photographs by Julius Shulman chronicle the development of Neutra's Silver Lake–based VDL Research House II, which was completed in 1966 for $8,000. A+D Museum, 8560 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-659-2445.



6 LADIES OF THE CAMELLIAS

OPENS AUG. 18. In Lillian Groag's repartee-filled play, Paris is on the verge of burning while rival thespians Sarah Bernhardt and Eleonora Duse duke it out diva style. Call for times and prices. Colony Theater Company, 555 N. 3rd St., Burbank, 818-558-7000.

7 THE SCHEME OF THINGS

THROUGH AUG. 29. Dan Oliverio has adapted Jacinto Benavente's commedia dell'arte about two cons working a town full of self-absorbed marks. Nicolas Pavlos (below) stars. Call for times. Tickets, $28. El Portal Center for the Arts, 5269 Lankershim Blvd., North Hollywood, 888-972-4363.



8 K-BIG DISCO FEVER 3

AUG. 14. KC & the Sunshine Band, the Village People, Evelyn "Champagne" King, and the Trammps burn this mother of nostalgia shows down. At 7:30. Tickets, $25.50–$65. Greek Theater, 2700 N. Vermont Ave., 213-480-3232.

9 AL GREEN

JULY 31. The Reverend's definitely good advertising for God. At 7:30. Tickets, $25.50–$70.50. Greek Theater, 2700 N. Vermont Ave., 213-480-3232.

10 41ST ANNUAL HUCK FINN FISHING DERBY

AUG. 21. Ole Miss the Pacific Ocean ain't, but that don't stop 21st-century Huck Finns and Becky Thatchers from bringing their rods and reels to this fishing contest. At 8. Admission, free. Huntington Beach Pier, Main St. and Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, 714-536-5262.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT HOMECOMING, 1995, BY BO BARTLETT/COLUMBUS MUSEUM; MUSEUM PURCHASE, MADE POSSIBLE BY NORMAN S. ROTHSCHILD IN HONOR OF HIS PARENTS, ALEEN AND IRWIN B. ROTH; COURTESY OF THE ARTIST; LARRY UNDERHILL/

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JAZZ, ROCK & WORLD

MIXED IN MEXICO *July 29 and Aug. 5.* The *Made in Mexico* show has spawned a hip scene on the Hammer plaza. Pop-punk mariachi band Los Super Elegantes ups the *queso* quotient (July 29), and Sonido Apokalitzin's DJs dig up vintage Mexican vinyl and Super 8 flicks (Aug. 5). *At 6:30. Admission, free. UCLA Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood, 310-443-7000.*

CONCERTS IN THE PAST *July 29, Aug. 5, and Aug. 12.* Picnicking and dancing are heartily encouraged at these old-time concerts featuring Ian Whitcomb and His Dance Band (July 29), the Night Blooming Jazzmen (Aug. 5), and the Crazy Rhythm Hot Society Orchestra (Aug. 12). *6:30–8:30. Admission, free. Homestead Museum, 15415 E. Don Julian Rd., City of Industry, 626-968-8492.*



A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

Bowled Over

The Hollywood Bowl's summer shows are an L.A. ritual, with or without the picnic basket

COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA *July 28.* Dianne Reeves, Diane Schuur, and Jon Hendricks swing and sing.

AN EVENING WITH K.D. LANG *July 30–31.* The pop-smart Rufus Wainwright and the Phil make Miss Chatelaine bubble over even more.

PIANO MASTERS *Aug. 4.* Dave Brubeck, McCoy Tyner, and Ramsey Lewis take three.

SWINGI SWINGI SWINGI *Aug. 6–7.* Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, the L.A. Phil, and conductor Jeff Tyzik go retro.

REGGAE NIGHT III *Aug. 8.* Bunny Wailer, the Skatalites, and Luciano rock steady.

TCHAIKOVSKY SPECTACULAR *Aug. 13–14.* Fireworks punctuate the USC Marching Band and the Phil's 1812 Overture performance.

NEW ORLEANS NIGHT *Aug. 16.* The Neville Brothers, Terence Blanchard, and the Dirty Dozen Brass Band bring a slice of the Crescent City.

BERNSTEIN'S MASS *Aug. 19.* Martin Alsop conducts baritone Jubilant Sykes, the L.A. Phil, and the Pacific Chorale in Leonard Bernstein's spirited take on chant, jazz, and rock.

WALT DISNEY: 75 YEARS OF MUSIC *Aug. 20–21.* John Mauceri conducts the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra in a survey of Disney hits from *Fantasia* to *The Lion King*.

WORLD HIP HOP *Aug. 29.* Wyclef Jean, Manu Dibango, and DJ Z-Trip globe-trot.

Call for times and prices. 2301 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, 323-850-2000.

SANTA MONICA PIER TWILIGHT DANCE SERIES *July 29–Aug. 26.* Katharine King ushers in her 20th anniversary (and perhaps her last season as hands-on impresario) with the Ex-Centric Sound System (July 29), Janice Jan and Richie Havens (Aug. 5), Andrea Echeverri (Aug. 12), Billy Vera & the Beaters and Thee Midniters (Aug. 19), and Blackalicious (Aug. 26). *7:30–9:30. Admission, free. Santa Monica Pier, Colorado and Ocean Aves., Santa Monica, 310-458-8900.*

SKIRBALL'S SUNSET CONCERTS *July 29–Aug. 26.* The crowd loosens up with the Arab-Israeli Orchestra of Nazareth's fence-mending music (July 29), Los Texmaniacs' *tejano* tunes (Aug. 5), Jaojoby's electronica (Aug. 12), Le Vent du Nord's Quebecois-flavored folk (Aug. 19), and Arash's Middle Eastern jazz (Aug. 26). *At 8. Admission, free. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 310-440-4500.*

HENRY MANCINI INSTITUTE SUMMER MUSIC FESTIVAL *July 31–Aug. 14.* At spots all over town, students jam with Mark Isham at "A Tribute to American Film Music" (July 31), Monica Mancini at "A Tribute to Henry Mancini" (Aug. 7), Christian McBride at the "Jazz String Bands & Big Band Concert" (Aug. 12), and conductor Patrice Rushen and Hank Award recipient Burt Bacharach at the fund-raising "Mancini Musicale" (Aug. 14). *Concerts: At 8. Admission, free. Musicale: At 8:30. Tickets, $20–$50. Call 310-825-1900.*

GRAND PERFORMANCES *July 31–Aug. 27.* Downtown sounds even better with Karsh Kale & Realize's South Asian "massive" sound (July 31), Kélélé's Congan rumba (Aug. 8), BajoFondo Tango Club's "electrolatino" (Aug. 13), the sword-swinging City Contemporary Dance Company (Aug. 19), Cheech Marin and Los Lobos' Louie Pérez in conversation (Aug. 24), and Quetzal's "Homenaje a Los Lobos" (Aug. 27). *Call for times. Admission, free. California Plaza, 350 S. Grand Ave., 213-687-2159.*

HEART *Aug. 1.* Ann and Nancy Wilson give KMET fans something to live for. Opener Lisa Loeb works the cat glasses crowd. *Call for time and prices. Greek Theater, 2700 N. Vermont Ave., 213-480-3232.*

ERIC CLAPTON *Aug. 2.* God's devil blues are red-hot. *Call for time and prices. Hollywood Bowl, 2301 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, 213-480-3232.*

ALOHA LIVE 2004! *Aug. 8.* Willie K and Amy Hanaiali'lei on the mellow vibes. *Call for time and prices. Greek Theater, 2700 N. Vermont Ave., 213-480-3232.*

THE WHO *Aug. 9.* The magic bus is going mobile. *Call for time and prices. Hollywood Bowl, 2301 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, 213-480-3232.*

BOSTON *Aug. 11.* Fresh cash in the bank? Yeah, that's more than a feeling. *Call for time and prices. Universal Amphitheater, Universal City, 213-480-3232.*

NATALIE MERCHANT *Aug. 11–12.* What's up, Tigerlily? *Call for times. Tickets, $49. Ford Amphitheater, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood, 213-480-3232.*

THE CORRS *Aug. 14.* Three lasses and one bloke return with their fiddle-fueled Irish pop. *At 8. Tickets, $42–$61. Kodak Theater, Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 213-480-3232.*

CHAKA KHAN *Aug. 24.* What she got will sure 'nuff do you good. *At 8. Tickets, $30–$60. Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts, 12700 Center Court Dr., Cerritos, 800-300-4345.*

AN EVENING WITH TONY BENNETT *Aug. 25.* Bennett warbles on the little street where old friends meet. *Call for time and prices. Greek Theater, 2700 N. Vermont Ave., 213-480-3232.*

RITES OF STRINGS *Aug. 28.* Violinist Jean-Luc Ponty, guitarist Al Di Meola, and bassist Stanley Clarke explore the string theory. *At 8. Tickets, $45–$60. Royce Hall, UCLA, Westwood, 213-480-3232.*

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND *Aug. 28–29.* Jam, bam, thank you, band. Ben Harper & the Innocent Criminals open. *At 4. Tickets, $53. Home Depot Center, 18400 Avalon Blvd., Carson, 213-480-3232.*

CLASSICAL & EXPERIMENTAL

NINO ROTA'S THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT *Aug. 6 and 8.* As the doyenne of the Music Academy of the West, Marilyn Horne puts her star students through their paces in the West Coast premiere of Nino Rota's play-

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ful opera. *Call for times. Tickets, $35–$55. Lobero Theater, 33 E. Canon Perdido, Santa Barbara, 805-963-8787.*

SOUTHWEST CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL AT THE HUNTINGTON: CONCERTS FOR THE CENTENNIAL OF CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD *Aug. 14–15 and 28–29.* The ensemble revels in Isherwood's Berliner zeitgeist by performing selections from Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera*. *At 7:30. Tickets, $25–$126. Huntington Library, Art Collections & Botanical Gardens, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, 800-726-7147.*

OPERALIA 2004 *Aug. 23–28.* Plácido Domingo's search for fresh under-thirtysomething talent culminates in the *Idol*-esque "Final Contest" performances. *Call for times. Preliminary and semifinal auditions: Admission, free. Walt Disney Concert Hall, 111 S. Grand Ave. Final Contest: $10–$50. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave. Call 213-972-8001.*

FETES & FESTS

38TH ANNUAL SAWDUST ART FESTIVAL *Continuing.* Arts, crafts, acrobats, and munchies take root under the eucalyptus for the summer. *10–10. Tickets, $2–$16. 935 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, 949-494-3030.*

X GAMES X *Aug. 5–8.* 'Core athletes and the people who love them can take in extreme skateboarding, moto bike stunts, and in-line verts at venues around Southern California. *Visit www.espn.com.*



A LITTLE MORE NIGHT MUSIC

Ford Ward

Across the Cahuenga Pass, there's more alfresco action at the Ford

PACIFICO DANCE COMPANY *July 31.* The troupe reinvents a 1930s dance hall in the premiere of its *Salón México*.

THIS IS BELLY DANCE! *Aug. 14.* A bevy of beautiful women (and a few good men) chart (with great costumes) the history behind the moves.

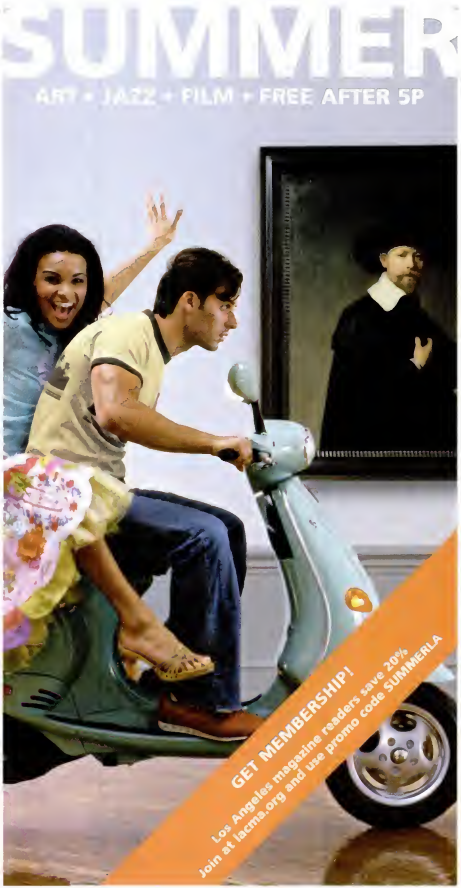
THEY SHOOT MEXICANS, DON'T THEY? *Aug. 14 and 21.* In this workshop staging, About Productions' Theresa Chavez and Rose Portillo explore the encounter between early Hollywood and local Latinos.

FIESTA PERU *Aug. 20.* INCA, the Peruvian Ensemble, shares the sounds of the Andes, and Cambalache Negro offers the African-influenced beat of the port cities.

JAZZ PILGRIMAGE 2004: A TRIBUTE TO ALEX ACUÑA *Aug. 21.* The Jazz on the Latin Side All-Stars pay tribute to Peruvian percussionist Acuña.

Call for times and prices. 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East, Hollywood, 323-GO-1-FORD.

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THE INVENTIVE DOCTOR FRANKLIN SHOW *Aug. 7.* Amid a collection of antique printing presses (including the Grasshopper cylinder press and the Linotype Typesetting Machine), "Benjamin Franklin" holds forth on newspaper printing and—what else?—electricity. *At 11. Tickets, $6. International Printing Museum, 315 Torrance Blvd., Carson, 310-515-1766.*

64TH ANNUAL NISEI WEEK FEST *Aug. 7–15.* Japanese and Japanese American dolls, swords, batik, textiles, ikebana, bonsai, ceramics, and tea ceremony demos fill the community center complex. *Call for times and prices. Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, 244 S. San Pedro St., 213-628-2725, ext. 127.*

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER *Aug. 12.* The best-dressed bowsers, the waggiest tails, and the pups with the funniest tricks compete. *4:30–8. Admission, free. Fullerton Farmers Market, Wilshire Ave. between Harbor Blvd. and Pomona Ave., Fullerton, 714-738-6545.*

CA BOOM *Aug. 12–15.* Designers of all stripes converge on the Civic, while looky-loos head to homes belonging to the Eames family and architects such as Steven Kanner and Steve Ehrlich. (Opening-night proceeds benefit Los Angeles Conservancy) *Call for times. Tickets, $27.50–$82.50. Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, 1855 Main St., Santa Monica, www.caboomfest.com.*

19TH ANNUAL LOS ANGELES AFRICAN MARKETPLACE & CULTURAL FAIRE *Starts Aug. 21.* Enjoy gospel music, the Black Inventors Museum, a tennis tournament, a "Native American Pow Wow," a spoken-word festival, serious shopping, and food galore. *10–9. Tickets, $3–$6. Exposition Park, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. between Vermont Ave. and Figueroa St., www.africanmarketplace.org.*

70TH ANNUAL PAGEANT OF THE MASTERS *Through Aug. 29.* Through artistry and by keeping really still, volunteers create tableaux vivants. *At 8:30. Tickets, $15–$80. Irvine Bowl Park, 650 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, 800-487-3378.*

THEATER, PERFORMANCE & CABARET

OPENINGS

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE *July 27–Aug. 1.* Flappers and a bouncy score (courtesy of composer Jeanine Tesori and lyricist Dick Scanlan) bring Jazz Age pizzazz to this movie turned musical. *Call for times. Tickets, $28.75–$65.75. Orange County Performing Arts Center, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, 714-740-7878.*

ON BORROWED TIME *Opens July 31.* An abandoned boy's grandfather plans to outwit death in Paul Osborn's play. *Call for times. Tickets, $28–$20. Theater 40, 241 S. Moreno Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-364-0535.*

THE PRODUCERS *Aug. 3–22.* Creator Mel Brooks and choreographer Susan Stroman mix kitsch with kicks. *Call for times. Tickets, $44.25–$68.25. Orange County Performing Arts Center, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, 714-740-7878.*

INTIMATE APPAREL *Opens Aug. 5.* In Lynn Nottage's play, an African American designer assesses her life in 1905 New York. *Call for times and prices. Mark Taper Forum, 135 N. Grand Ave., 213-628-2772.*

WATCH ON THE RHINE *Opens Aug. 7.* Lillian Hellman's 1940 drama about an anti-Nazi underground resonates today. *Call for times. Tickets, $8–$25. Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga, 310-455-3723.*

SMOKE ON THE MOUNTAIN *Opens Aug. 12.* Connie Ray's comedy focuses on the values of the Sanders Family Singers. *Call for times and prices. Lamb's Players Theater at Joan B. Kroc Theater for the Performing Arts, 6834 University Ave., San Diego, 619-437-0600.*

THICKER THAN WATER *Opens Aug. 13.* Roy Battocchio's new comedy pits one Aunt Gertrude against her Italian family's business. *Call for times and prices. Long Beach Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-494-1014.*

VINCENT IN BRIXTON *Opens Aug. 13.* Nicholas Wright picked up the 2003 Olivier Award for Best Play for his drama about the entangled lives at the boarding-house where van Gogh lived. *Call for times and prices. Pasadena Playhouse, 39 S. El Molino Ave., Pasadena, 626-356-PLAY.*

NATIONAL PASTIME *Opens Aug. 14.* James Reynolds (*Days of Our Lives*) directs Bryan Harnetiaux's new play about the color barrier–busting moves of Jackie Robinson. *Call for times. Tickets, $15–$20. Fremont Centre Theater, 1000 Fremont Ave., South Pasadena, 626-441-5977.*

BRIGADOON *Aug. 17–29.* Director Stuart Ross (*Forever Plaid*) maintains Agnes de Mille's original choreogra-

FROM TOP: ANDY RIOS; GARY BASEMAN; CRAIG SCHWARTZ; COURTESY RANCHO LOS CERRITOS; NO CREDIT; RON MESAROS/© J. PAUL GETTY TRUST

Mass Distractions

'Tis the season for festivals of all kinds to please every cultural palate

WHAT



CENTRAL AVENUE JAZZ FESTIVAL JULY 31–AUG. 1
Call for times. Admission, free. Central Ave. and 42nd Pl., 323-234-4452.

10TH ANNIVERSARY CHILI COOK-OFF AND HAWAIIAN FESTIVAL AUG. 1
9–1. Admission, free. 450 N. Rexford Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-550-4796.



LEGACIES: BASEBALL FROM FLATBUSH TO THE CITY OF ANGELS AUG. 15
At 8. Tickets, $12–$20. Ford Amphitheater, 2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East., Hollywood, 323-GO-1-FORD.

MUD MANIA: A CELEBRATION OF ADOBE AUG. 15
12:30–4:30. Tickets, $3–$5. Rancho Los Cerritos, 4600 Virginia Rd., Long Beach, 562-570-1755.

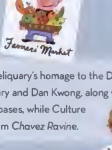
4TH ANNUAL OLD WEST FEST: A GATHERING OF COWGIRL CULTURE, MUSIC, AND POETRY AUG. 28
11–11. Tickets, $10–$60. Museum of the American West, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park, 866-666-8932.



GETTY FAMILY FESTIVAL AUG. 28
10–6. Admission, free. Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A., 310-440-7300.

WOW

The Susie Hansen Latin Jazz Band and the Justo Almario Quartet add flava to the Saturday lineup, and the Gerald Wilson Orchestra and the Ernie Andrews Band go straight ahead on Sunday.

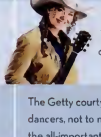


The Beverly Hills Farmers' Market adds sizzle to hula lessons and lei making with chili tastings and an "Eat the Heat" jalapeño-munching contest.

Comic Elayne Boosler emcees the Baseball Reliquary's homage to the Dodger boys of summer. Performers Heather Woodbury and Dan Kwong, along with Dodger organist Nancy Bea Hefley, cover the bases, while Culture Clash (left) digs up the turf with an excerpt from *Chavez Ravine.*



Families have the option of getting dirty in the adobe workshop or staying clean (yeah, right) in the soap-making class. The Witcher Brothers strum bluegrass tunes in the garden.

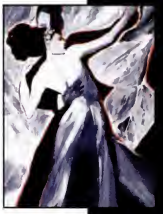


Devon Dawson (who played Jessie the Yodelin' Cowgirl in *Toy Story 2*) lets out a mighty sound, and Joni Harms and Belinda Gail (left) pay tribute to Dale Evans amid rope-twirling.

The Getty courtyard's filled with Celtic and South Asian musicians and dancers, not to mention a giant, rather friendly papier-mâché dragonfly and the all-important dragonfly shepherd.

"The Compromise" 48" x 48"





"Bus Stop" 48" x 48"



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oil on canvas - center (top) *"Night at The Grove"* 36" x 48"

center (bottom) *"Queen of Hearts"* 36" x 48"

phy for Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's time-traveling love story. *Call for times and prices. Freud Playhouse, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-2101.*

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS *Opens Aug. 24.* Audrey II adds plenty of bite to Howard Ashman and Alan Menken's tasty musical. *Call for times. Tickets, $25–$80. Ahmanson Theater, 135 N. Grand Ave., 213-628-2772.*

CONTINUING

HAIRSPRAY The no-longer-so-hirsute Bruce Vilanch and the divine Marissa Jaret Winokur headline in this staging of the Tony-winning musical. Creator John Waters, composers Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, and director Jack O'Brien are behind the bouffants. *Call for times. Tickets, $27–$87. Pantages Theater, 6233 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 213-365-3500.*

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: CELEBRITY AUTOBIOGRAPHIES Eugene Pack's troupe gets lots of laughs when it reads from the autobiographies of Destiny's Child, Dolly Parton, and John Travolta. *Call for times. Tickets, $8. Room 5, 143 N. La Brea Ave., 323-769-5511.*

LOBBY HERO In this comedy by Kenneth Lonergan, cops and security guards tangle in the crosshairs. *Call for times. Tickets, $20.50–$25. Odyssey Theater, 2055 S. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 310-477-2055.*

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM Bottom's up. *Call for times. Tickets, $8–$25. Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga, 310-455-3723.*

OLD GLOBE SUMMER SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL Will's canon is covered with performances of *As You Like It, The Two Noble Kinsmen,* and *Antony and Cleopatra. Call for times and prices. Lowell Davies Festival Theater, Old Globe, 1363 Old Globe Way, Balboa Park, San Diego, 619-23-GLOBE.*

UNDER MILK WOOD Ellen Geer directs Dylan Thomas's bittersweet look at a small town's life. *Call for times. Tickets, $8–$25. Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga, 310-455-3723.*

THE WINTER'S TALE There's intrigue in Shakespeare's comedy about a high-maintenance king. *Call for times. Tickets, $8–$25. Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum, 1419 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga, 310-455-3723.*

CLOSING

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC *Through July 31.* Victor Garber, Judith Ivey, and Zoe Caldwell star in the Los Angeles Opera's summer programming of Stephen Sondheim's classic. Susan Stroman choreographs; Scott Ellis directs. *Call for times. Tickets, $20–$90. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, 135 N. Grand Ave., 213-365-3500.*

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE *Through Aug. 1.* British playwright David Edgar (*Nicholas Nickleby*) received rave reviews from the American press in 2003 for his sprawling two-play cycle about a West Coast campaign. *Call for times and prices. La Jolla Playhouse, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla, 858-550-1010.*

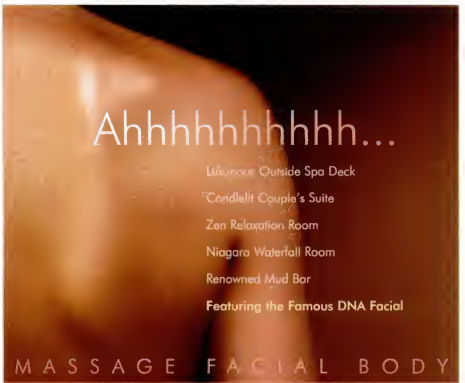
COOKIN' AT THE COOKERY *Through Aug. 1.* Marion J. Caffey directs his musical about singer Alberta Hunter wowing the crowds at a Greenwich Village hot spot. *Call for times. Tickets, $28–$46. Geffen Playhouse at the Brentwood Theater, 1301 Wilshire Blvd., Bldg. 211, Brentwood, 310-208-5454.*

ROCKET TO THE MOON *Through Aug. 3.* Clifford Odets set this May-December romance in the 1930s. *Call for times. Tickets, $20–$23.50. Pacific Resident Theater, 703 Venice Blvd., Venice, 310-822-8392.*

DANCING AT LUGHNASA *Through Aug. 7.* In Brian Friel's play, five sisters find liberation at a pagan harvest festival. *Call for times and prices. Long Beach Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-494-1014.*

WHIP ITI SUGAR AND SPICE EVERYTHING NICE . . . *Through Aug. 8.* Sweet Kellianne offers a mélange for the senses with her cooking demos, dessert recipes, and autobiographical yarns. *Call for times. Tickets, $15. 2100 Square Feet, 5615 San Vicente Blvd., 310-230-6911.*

SLOW BOAT *Through Aug. 14.* Nick Starr's protagonist has joined the United Followers of Tsing Sure Sure, a cult that promotes transubstantiation. *At 8. Tickets, $15. Los Angeles Repertory Theater, 6560 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-470-9899.*





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- Offered at $6,000,000. Please visit **www.HoodRiverDream.com** for a virtual tour with photographs, maps and detailed information or contact Marty Oppenheimer via email martyop@charter.net or phone 541.308.0007. (Brokers protected.)

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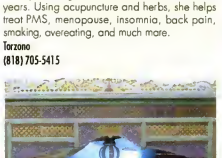
ACUPUNCTURIST, 1999

Dr. Dening Cai, OMD, CA

Cai graduated from the Hubei College of Traditional Chinese Medicine in China and has been practicing in the United States for over 20 years. Using acupuncture and herbs, she helps treat PMS, menopause, insomnia, back pain, smoking, overeating, and much more.

Torzono

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ASIAN FURNITURE, 2003

Out of Asia

Charge your creativity and stimulate your senses in this 43,000-square-foot lifestyle environment, south of Beverly Hills, where designers discover imports from antiques and contemporary furnishings from all over Asia to ethnographic objets d'art from Africa. A favorite destination and a showcase feast for your eyes. Live your drama within your space!

W. Los Angeles

(310) 204-5885

BABY CLOTHES, 2002

Lost & Found

Hollywood's homage to what childhood should be: bright & playfull The colorful infant- to-size 12 clothes will have you pining for grown-up versions. Complete your shopping three doors down at Last & Found etcetera, featuring custom furniture, art books, clothing, & unusual gifts from around the world.

6314 Yucca Street, Hollywood

(323) 856-0921

BALLET CLASSES, 1999

Dance Studio No. 1

An exceptionally qualified neighborhood Dance School with guidelines set by The Royal Academy of Dance. Their highly trained teachers demonstrate kindness, patience & show a passion for working with children of all ages. Ballet, Jazz and Tap Dance classes offered year round.

10850 Pico Boulevard, S-610, Los Angeles

(310) 446-4443

2037 Granville Avenue, Los Angeles

(310) 235-2193

BMW SERVICE, 2001

Check Point Automotive

Check Point Automotive is celebrating ten years of service in Las Angeles. Steve Beck and Chris Toppenberg invite you to bring your BMW to Check Point Autamative far expert service and repair.

3906 Grand View Boulevard, Los Angeles

(310) 391-9774



BROW JOB, 2000

Bobbe Joy Makeup Studio

Don't go to Bobbe Joy if you want "anorexic eyebrows." The Beverly Hills makeup diva is the "eyebrow resuscitator." She plucks, never waxes—and the results are eye-opening. Her scented lip glasses saund like a dessert menu —chocolate, raspberry and cappuccino. Her exceptianal services and signature line af custom-blended cosmetics have made fans out of many celebs & socialites.

236 1/2 S. Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills

(310) 275-3505

CAR WASH, 1996

Handy J

In practically every L.A. guidebook and CIA field manual you will find the champion. it was not possible to dethrone them. They are also known for the best price in town for sponge pod detailing. Simply a car's best friend, try the Handy J Supreme.

14311 Ventura Boulevard, Sherman Oaks

(818) 788-3011

CHEAP FASHIONS, 2002

Last Chance

Dream destination for "boutique" shoppers who appreciate intimate and personal service and love good deals! Up to 90% off designer labels including 7 Jeans and Dolce & Gabbana. They work directly with designers and consolidate from the best boutiques in L.A. including Madison and Tracey Ross.

8712 Washington Boulevard, Culver City

(310) 287-2333

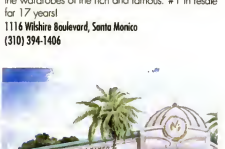
DESIGNER RESALE SHOP, 1999

The Address Boutique

With its warm and elegantly chic interior, it's no wonder smart women buy their Chanel, Gucci, Prada, and more at this delightful bautique. Personalized service, bargain prices, designer resale and new clothing plus accessories from the wardrobes of the rich and famous. #1 in resale far 17 years!

1116 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica

(310) 394-1406



DRY CLEANERS, 1999

Steamer Cleaners

High quality, unsurpassed service, environmentally safe dry cleaning could get spots off a leopard! Clothes fly across the neoclassical glass building on roller coaster conveyors. Competitive prices, candy abounds, 3% schaol danatian program. Try Executive Service for meticulausly hand-finished garments touched only by managers.

www.steamercleaners.com

13646 Ventura Boulevard (at Woodman), Sherman Oaks

(818) 906-2345

DVD RENTAL, 2000, DVD STORE, 2002

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Laser Blazer offers the largest selection of DVD's (sale or rent) in Los Angeles. All new releases are 25% off everyday. Visit us at www.LASERBLAZER.com to see the latest new releases and the largest selection af used DVDs and laserdiscs anywhere.

10587 W. Pico Boulevard, West Los Angeles

(310) 475-4788

FACIALS, 2001

Verabella

The award winning facials at Verabella have received numerous editorial accolades for innovation and effectiveness, but many clients caunt an The Champagne Wishes & Caviar Creams Facial™ as a good luck charm for winning and Oscar®, Emmy® or Grammy®. Which leads us to wonder, are they glowing because they won, or is it the facial?

310 N. Canon Drive, Beverly Hills

(310) 278-4733

FANCY KIDS' CLOTHES, 2003

Saturday's Child

Far more than 30 years, a favorite destination for classic children's clothing-sizes infant through 16. We feature both domestic and European lines including Burberry, Petit Faune, Florence Eiseman, Palo, MonkeyWear and Anavini. Don't forget shoes, accessories and our famous bows to complete any outfit.

2529 Mission Street, San Marino

(626) 441-8888

ICE CREAM, 2003

Mashti Malone's Ice Cream

If you're looking for a unique taste with just a hint of the exotic, turn to Mashti Malone's in Hollywood. For over 20 years we have been making such unique and intoxicating flavors as Rosewater, Saffron, Orange Blossom and the refreshing Rosewater and Basil Seed Ice.

www.mashti.com

1525 N. La Brea Ave, Hollywood

(323)-874-0144

KID'S CLASS, 2002

Creative Space

Finding classes that capture a child's imagination is challenging. We not only meet that challenge but go beyond. Three months to 12 years old. Innovative classes like Fairy School, Skateboard Art, Break Dancing, Birthday Parties, and Spectacular Summer Camp make us the place to be!

6325 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles

323-462-4600

www.creativespaceusa.com

KID'S FURNITURE, 2001

Joseph Wahl Arts

Joseph Wahl Arts' eclectic blend of custom made, hand-painted children's furniture, antiques and unique decorative accessories are perfect for any child's room. Come in and find something unique. Stores open Tues.–Sat., 10:30 am–5:30 pm.

www.Josephwahlarts.com

5305 Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Woodland Hills

(818) 340-9245

2955 Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks

(805) 449-1525

KIDS' SWIMMING LESSONS, 2003

Family Life Aquatics

Swim lessons for all ages and levels. Convenient pool locations in Brentwood, Santa Monica, and Woodland Hills. Parent and me, private, group, and adult lessons offered. House calls available for no extra charge in operating areas. Surf lessons and private lifeguards, too.

www.FamilyLifeAquatics.com

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LASER EYE SURGEON, 1999

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A Harvard Medical School grad, Dr. Andrew Caster is one of the most respected LASIK doctors in the United States. Whether you're nearsighted, farsighted, or have astigmatism, after a mere five painless minutes with the newest LASIK treatment, glasses and contact lenses can be just a silly old memory.

www.castervision.com

9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 265E, Beverly Hills

(310) 274-1221

MAC REPAIR, 2000

MacEnthusiasts

Savvy consumers eschew those slick Apple Stores and get their "Mac-an" at MacEnthusiasts. Celebrating their tenth anniversary, MacEnthusiasts is the place to grab a Mini-iPod, repair that ailing Ti-Baak, or rent a G5 for a test-drive. Knowledgeable staff! Best prices in town!

10600 W. Pico Boulevard, Los Angeles

(310) 287-2777

MOBILE PET GROOMER, 2002

Hollywood Grooming

It's about Love and it's about Perfection! Those two words best describe this popular dog grooming company who has provided excellent service for the past ten years. With their reliable and reputable services and distinguished customer satisfaction, this is the perfect gift idea. For your convenience gift certificates are available on the Web.

www.gohollywoodgrooming.com

(310) 476-3353

PET ACCESSORIES, 2003

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No other store has better pet paraphernalia. A unique boutique specializing in fun toys, comfy beds, cool accessories and healthy eats for dogs of all breeds. Perpetual employee of the month Roscoe, a 100-pound chocolate lab, greets visitors and models the wears. WOOF!

12332 Ventura Boulevard, Studio City

(818) 505-8411

PLACE FOR A KID'S PARTY, 2003

Bob Baker Marionette Theater

Join world famous Bob Baker Marionettes for a magical journey into a fantastical wonderland! Over 100 of Bob Baker's exquisitely designed marionettes will charm you in an in-the-round performance… making you part of the show. Reservations required.

1345 W. 1st Street, Los Angeles

(213) 250-9995

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For over 42 years, Play-Well has been providing California families with backyard fun. We have just about everything for your backyard including tree houses, playhouses, swingsets, Groundscape, Goalsetter Basketball Systems, dog houses and more! Come visit our park-like display. If you're going to play…Play-Well.

www.play-well.com

686 S. Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena

(800) 585-0603

RUG CLEANER, 2002

Thomas Rug Cleaning

After 83 years in business, the folks at this establishment in Los Feliz have yet to meet a carpet they couldn't save. Favored by top rug dealers and designers, Hagop Tarkomian and his crew treat precious Persian rugs and well-worn antiques to an intense one-week scrub-down.

3000 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles

(800) 259-9929



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VALET, 2003

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A stuntwoman, lawyer, soccer coach/mom, actors, singers, a mathematician…. We are the most extensively trained valet drivers in the business. The most GORGEOUS valets in America!! Specializing in the Greater L.A. area. Licensed, Bonded, Insured.

www.valetofthedolls.com

(818) 982-Doll (3655)

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Mr. Wooldridge has 20 years of experience and was raised in the business by his father, who papered Howard Hughes's Florida estate. Rick has delighted clients from Bel-Air to Pasadena with his meticulous craftsmanship. On time, on budget, and trustworthy, he is a perfectionist's perfectionist.

818-567-2468

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Kor Health & Fitness

Veteran personal trainer Christine Hazeltan is still reshaping bodies at her new, hip location. She and her top-notch trainers focus on a functional approach to fitness in which core training lays the foundation for all body makeovers. Indoor cycling, yoga and pilates makes this a one-stop-shop!

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Voted the "#1 Wine Store in L.A." by Zagat, Wally's has the largest selection of high-quality wines and spirits on the West Coast, plus gift baskets for any occasion. We'll deliver or ship anywhere in the world – what you want, where you want, when you want it!

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Sacred Movement

Max Strom and Saul David Raye have gathered L.A.'s all-star teachers—Micheline Berry, Shiva Rea, Erich Schiffmann-under one serene roof in Venice. Class styles differ, but experience and soulfulness are the common threads. The boutique is amazing and the friendly staff makes you feel right at home.

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Deadline to participate in the next issue is August 5th

PARIS COMMUNE *Through Aug. 15.* Playwrights Steven Cosson and Michael Friedman add 19th-century-style cabaret to their telling of Europe's first socialist revolution. *Call for times and prices. La Jolla Playhouse, 2910 La Jolla Village Dr., La Jolla, 858-550-1010.*

SHIRLEY VALENTINE *Through Aug. 21.* In Willy Russell's comedy, new life awaits a British housewife abroad in Greece. *Call for times and prices. Long Beach Playhouse Studio Theater, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, 562-494-1014.*

FOREVER PLAID *Through Aug. 29.* Stuart Ross's musical features four lads and second chances. *Call for times and prices. Laguna Playhouse, 606 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, 949-497-ARTS.*

DANCE

BANGOLI DANCE COMPANY *July 30.* In the "Love Lyrics" program, Malthi Iyengar's dancers tell the tales of Krishna the lover and King Rama the demon slayer. *At 7. Call for prices. Norton Simon Museum of Art, 411 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, 626-449-6840.*

UNIVERSAL BALLET *Aug. 6–8.* Kirov alum Oleg Vinogradov and the Korea-based dance troupe uphold the tradition of Russian classical ballet in this staging of *Romeo and Juliet. Call for times. Tickets, $20–$77. Kodak Theater, Hollywood & Highland, 6801 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-955-5700.*

PTERO DANCE THEATER *Aug. 13–22.* Local choreographer Paula Present launches her new company with the Neil Diamond song-sung moves of *Diamond Dances* and an exploration of the sculpture of Rodin in *Where the Body Ends. Call for times. Tickets, $10–$20. Ivy Substation, 9070 Venice Blvd., Culver City, 310-399-3132.*

READINGS, LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

VIRGINIA POSTREL *Aug. 5.* The dynamist.com blogger, *New York Times* economics writer, and author of *The Substance of Style* examines today's culture of commerce. *At 7:30. Call for prices. Art Center College of Design, 1700 Lida St., Pasadena, 626-396-2335.*

MEDICINAL PLANTS OF THE CHUMASH *Aug. 7.* USC professor of molecular pharmacology James Adams and Chumash healer Cecelia Garcia discuss the medicinal uses of local plants. *At 1. Tickets, $5–$10. Museum of the American West, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park, 323-667-2000, ext. 354.*

NEW SCHOOL OF COOKING *Aug. 7, 19, and 29.* On the menu this month: "Summer Comfort Foods" (Aug. 7), "Middle Eastern Meze" (Aug. 19), and "A Cavalcade of Cupcakes" (Aug. 29). *Call for times and prices. 8690 Washington Blvd., Culver City, 310-842-9702.*

BUON FRESCO STUDIO COURSE *Aug. 10 and 17.* Michelangelo wanna-bes can get plastered (in a good way) when they fashion small frescoes with aged lime putty and ground pigments. *1–5. Registration, $45–$60. Museum Studios, Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A., 310-440-7300.*

BEYOND THE DA VINCI CODE *Starts Aug. 18.* USC lecturer Karen Lansky peels the layers from Leonardo da Vinci's life. *7:30–9. Tickets, $60. University of Judaism, 15600 Mulholland Dr., Bel-Air, 310-440-1246.*

NEW SHORT FICTION SERIES *Starts Aug. 18.* Impresario Sally Shore and crew read "Fatso," a story by Leelila Strogov, the editor of the literary journal *Swink. At 8. Tickets, $10. Beverly Hills Public Library, 444 N. Rexford Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-288-2220.*

RITZ COOKING CLASSES *Aug. 21.* It doesn't matter how Joe Hermanofski pronounces "tomato"—his tomato-based dishes are all good. *At 10. Registration, $125. Ritz-Carlton, Huntington Hotel & Spa, 1401 S. Oak Knoll Ave., Pasadena, 626-568-3900.*

LA CACHETTE'S COOKING WITH JEAN FRANÇOIS *Aug. 28.* Chef Jean François Meteigner goes to the

birds—duck, quail, and chicken, that is. *9–12:30. Registration, $100. La Cachette, 10506 S. Santa Monica Blvd., Century City, 310-470-4992.*

MUSEUMS

OPENINGS

ENCOUNTERS: EL NORTE: THE SPANISH AND MEXICAN NORTH *Opens Aug. 1.* Holdings from the Southwest Museum and the Museum of the American West chronicle regional Spanish, Mexican, and Native American history. *Museum of the American West, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park, 323-667-2000.*

DESIGNING TY: EMMY 2004 OUTSTANDING COSTUMES & ART DESIGN *Opens Aug 5.* The creations of the 2004 Emmy Award nominees for costume and set design enjoy life outside prime time. *Hollywood Entertainment Museum, 7021 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-465-7900.*

LUXURY TEXTILES EAST AND WEST: OPULENT INTERIORS *Opens Aug. 5.* Flemish millefleur tapestries from the 15th century are juxtaposed with Moghul tent panels from the 17th. *Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323-857-6000.*

SALUTING YODOU SPIRITS *Opens Aug. 8.* These ornate flags from the early 1900s to the late 1980s are used to honor spirits during ritual activities. *UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-4361.*

THE VIRGIN OF GUADALUPE: EXALTED AND EMPOWERED *Opens Aug. 28.* Paintings by J. Michael Walker, folk art by Betsabee Romero, and T-shirt iron-ons are included in this show that examines sacred and secular expressions of the icon. *Fullerton Museum Center, 301 N. Pomona Ave., Fullerton, 714-738-6545.*

CONTINUING & CLOSING

A+D MUSEUM *Continuing.* Public Works: Architectural Designs for the City of Los Angeles. *8560 Sunset Blvd., West Hollywood, 310-659-2445.*

ALYCE DE ROULET WILLIAMSON GALLERY *Continuing.* A Presidential Rogues Gallery: Satirical Posters, 1960s–Present. *Art Center College of Design, 1700 Lida St., Pasadena, 626-396-2346.*

BOWERS MUSEUM OF CULTURAL ART *Continuing.* Bridges to Understanding; Tibet: Treasures from the Roof of the World. *2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, 714-567-3600.*

CALIFORNIA AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM *Continuing.* Kickin' It with Joyce J. Scott. *600 State Dr. Exposition Park, 213-744-7432.*

CALIFORNIA HERITAGE MUSEUM *Continuing.* Everyday Life in California: Regional Watercolors, 1930–1960; Malibu Tile. *2612 Main St., Santa Monica, 310-392-8537.*

CALIFORNIA SCIENCE CENTER *Continuing.* The Changing Face of Women's Health; IMAX films: *Bugs! in 3-D, Coral Reef Adventure, The Human Body,* and *Volcanoes of the Deep Sea. 700 State Dr., Exposition Park. Center: 323-SCIENCE. IMAX: 213-744-7400.*

CHINESE AMERICAN MUSEUM *Continuing.* Invisible: Angel Island; Footsteps Through Time. *425 N. Los Angeles St., 213-626-5240.*

CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM *Continuing.* Mid-Century Mandarin: The Clay Canvases of Tyrus Wong. *5814 Wilshire Blvd., 323-937-4230.*

FREDERICK R. WEISMAN MUSEUM OF ART *Closing.* Claes Oldenburg: Drawings, 1959–1977; Claes Oldenburg with Coosje van Bruggen: Drawings, 1992–1998, in the Whitney Museum of American Art. *Pepperdine University, Malibu, 310-506-4851.*

FULLERTON MUSEUM CENTER *Closing.* Gotta Have It Too: Collecting in the Internet Age. *301 N. Pomona Ave., Fullerton, 714-738-6545.*

GETTY CENTER *Closing.* Photographers of Genius. *Continuing.* Spirit into Matter: The Photographs of Edmund Teske; Performing Video: The Collaboration on David Tudor's Sea Tails; The Arts of Fire: Islamic Influences on the Italian Renaissance. 1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A., 310-440-7300.

HOLLYWOOD ENTERTAINMENT MUSEUM *Closing.* The Making of Elvis!—50 Years of Promotion. *7021 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-465-7900.*

HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, ART COLLECTIONS & BOTANICAL GARDENS *Closing.* Sugaring Off: The Maple Sugar Paintings of Eastman Johnson. *Continuing.* Christopher Isherwood: A Writer and His World. *1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, 626-405-2100.*

JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM *Closing.* September 11: Bearing Witness to History. *369 E. 1st St., 213-625-0414.*

LAGUNA ART MUSEUM *Continuing.* 100 Artists See God. *307 Cliff Dr., Laguna Beach, 949-494-8971.*

LONG BEACH MUSEUM OF ART *Closing.* Masters of Their Craft: Highlights from the Smithsonian American Art Museum; The Modernist Jewelry of Claire Falkenstein. *2300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, 562-439-2119.*

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART *Closing.* Inventing Race: Casta Painting and Eighteenth-Century Mexico. *Continuing.* Beyond Geometry: Experiments in Form, 1940s–1970s; nano. *5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323-857-6000.*

MAK CENTER FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE *Closing.* Yves Klein: Air Architecture. *Schindler House, 835 N. Kings Rd., West Hollywood, 323-651-1510.*

MOCA AT CALIFORNIA PLAZA *Closing.* A Minimal Future? Art as Object, 1958–1968. *250 S. Grand Ave., 213-626-6222.*

MOCA AT THE GEFFEN CONTEMPORARY *Continuing.* Rodney Graham: A Little Thought; Sign Language. *152 N. Central Ave., 213-626-6222.*

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Garden Concerts for Kids at the Getty

Sharon Katz & the Peace Train (August 14 & 15) and Trout Fishing in America (August 21 & 22); 4 pm. Free. No reservations required. Parking $5. (310) 440-7300 www.getty.edu

$1 Billion California Project

Rick Caruso, founder and CEO of Caruso Affiliated, the company who brought us the prestigious Grove Shopping Center at The Farmer's Market, announced a project that will reinvent the retail and residential experience in Northern and Southern California. The $1 billion project, includes six new retail destinations throughout California, including the first-ever racetrack retail, entertainment and housing venues at Santa Anita Park in Arcadia and in Golden Gate Fields in Albany. (323) 900-8100 www.carusoaffiliated.com



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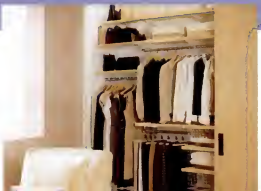
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Grand Opening

The Container Store opens in Pasadena August 14 (Fair Oaks and Union). Experience more than 10,000 products designed to save space and time! Ten percent of opening weekend sales will benefit the Armory Center for the Arts. www.containerstore.com



Summer Night of Style

Los Angeles magazine and GUESS co-hosted a night under the palms on May 18th celebrating the June Summer Style issue at the Viceroy hotel, Santa Monica. Guests mingled poolside while sipping on the newly launched Sophia Mini champagne and customized cocktails by Wyborowa Vodka and Chivas Regal. DJ Big Dave added to the mix spinning breakbeat electro house. (310) 260-7500

The Viceroy Hotel, Santa Monica



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Honoring double anniversaries, the 23rd Street Jewelers has unveiled their exclusive colored diamond and gemstone collection. Highlighting both rose gold and platinum in highly refined timeless designs. Rose cut diamonds embellished by micro-set colorless and pink diamonds, a fresh look for a vintage classic.
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MOCA AT THE PACIFIC DESIGN CENTER *Continuing.* Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec. *8687 Melrose Ave., West Hollywood, 213-626-6222.*

MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN WEST *Closing.* George Catlin and His Indian Gallery. *Continuing.* George Catlin and His Cartoon Collection. *4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park, 323-667-2000.*

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (DOWNTOWN) *Continuing.* Chicano Now: American Expressions. *1001 Kettner Blvd., San Diego, 858-454-3541.*

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART (LA JOLLA) *Continuing.* Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge. *700 Prospect St., La Jolla, 858-454-3541.*

MUSEUM OF JURASSIC TECHNOLOGY *Continuing.* Miracles and Disasters in Renaissance and Baroque Theater Machines; Rotten Luck: An Exhibit of Failing Dice from the Collections of Ricky Jay. *9341 Venice Blvd., Culver City, 310-836-6131.*

MUSEUM OF LATIN AMERICAN ART *Continuing.* César Menéndez: Cazador de Fantasías/Hunter of Fantasies; Latin American Artists: A Contemporary Journey. *628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach, 562-437-1689.*

MUSEUM OF NEON ART *Continuing.* Evolving Light; Prayers, Iconography of Economy. *501 W. Olympic Blvd., 213-489-9918.*

MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTS *Closing.* Wanderers, Travelers, and Adventurers: Images of Exploration; Another America: Robert Weingarten's Testimonial to the Amish. *1649 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego, 619-238-7559.*

MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE *Continuing.* Finding Our Families, Finding Ourselves. *9786 W. Pico Blvd., 310-553-9036.*

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM *Continuing.* L.A. light/motion/dreams. *900 Exposition Blvd., 213-763-DINO.*

NORTON SIMON MUSEUM OF ART *Closing.* The Magical Worlds of Ynez Johnston; Painted Poems: Rajput Paintings from the Ramesh and Urmil Kapoor Collection. *Continuing.* Chinese Art. *411 W. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, 626-449-6840.*

PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM *Continuing.* Depicting the Royal and Divine: Indian Paintings and Sculptures from the Pacific Asia Museum Collection; The Occupation of Showa Japan in Pictures: The Woodblocks of Wada Sanzo. *46 N. Robles Ave., Pasadena, 626-449-2742.*

PALM SPRINGS DESERT MUSEUM *Closing.* European Master Painters. *Continuing.* Best of the West. *101 Museum Dr., Palm Springs, 760-325-7186.*

PASADENA MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA ART *Continuing.* Topographies; Kenny Scharf: California Grown. *490 E. Union St., Pasadena, 626-568-3665.*

PASADENA MUSEUM OF HISTORY *Closing.* Wheels of Change. *470 W. Walnut St., Pasadena, 626-577-1660.*

PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM *Continuing.* French Curves: The Automobile as Sculpture. *6060 Wilshire Blvd., 323-930-CARS.*

SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART *Continuing.* American Beauty: Painting and Sculpture from the Detroit Institute of Arts, 1770–1920; Saint Peter and the Vatican: Legacy of the Popes. *1450 El Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego, 619-232-7931.*

SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM OF ART *Continuing.* Art of the Americas: Latin America and the United States, 1800 to Now!; Heartland: Paintings by Bo Bartlett, 1978–2002. *1130 State St., Santa Barbara, 805-963-4364.*

SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART *Closing.* Ant Farm, 1968–1978; Alex Slade: Vacant Lot. *2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, 310-586-6488.*

SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER *Continuing.* Traveling the Holy Land Through the Stereoscope. *2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 310-440-4500.*

UCLA FOWLER MUSEUM OF CULTURAL HISTORY *Closing.* Through My Father's Eyes: The Filipino American Photographs by Ricardo Ocreto Alvarado. *UCLA, Westwood, 310-825-4361.*

UCLA HAMMER MUSEUM *Closing.* The Chinese Looking Glass: Daumier's Voyages in a Foreign Land. *Continuing.* Made in Mexico. *10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood, 310-443-7000.*

UCR/CALIFORNIA MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY *Closing.* Dog Days of Summer. *UC Riverside, 909-787-4787.*

Q+A WE'VE GOT QUESTIONS THEY'VE GOT ANSWERS

Ronnie Wood



Ronnie Wood's got a triple-header in L.A. this summer. The musician-artist is exhibiting his most recent paintings at **Gallery 319** (and will be on hand for the "Collectors' Show"), Rhino Records just released the ***Faces: Five Guys Walk into a Bar*** box set, and he joins former bandmate Rod Stewart to go around the plynth at the **Hollywood Bowl**.

When was the last time you performed with Rod Stewart? We blew the roof off Madison Square Garden in February.

What is your favorite museum to muse in? The Prado in Spain.

You wanted to be a set design painter when you were younger. Is there a movie you wished you had worked on? *Dances with Wolves.*

Do you have moments, people, or places you like to capture when you're sketching on tour? Yeah, I like to capture the boys when we are working in the control room and lots of the people that come by my hotel room.

The tension in Mick and Keith's relationship adds to their creativity as the Glimmer Twins. As a solitary painter, where do you find your creative tension? Between Mick and Keith.

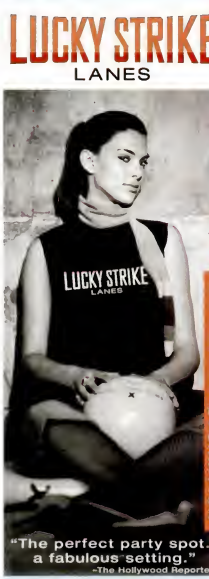
What's the one thing you always said you'd never do but did? Never back all the horses in one race, which I did recently at Royal Ascot—all bare one, which ended up winning the race!

EXHIBIT: *Opens Aug. 21. Collectors' Show, Aug. 28. Gallery 319, 319 Wilshire Blvd., Santa Monica, 310-899-1499.* CONCERT: *Aug. 30. At 8. Call for prices. Hollywood Bowl, 2301 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood, 213-480-3232.*

RONNIE WOOD BY RONNIE WOOD/© RONNIE WOOD

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UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM (CAL STATE LONG BEACH) *Closing.* Hannelore Baron: Works from 1969 to 1987. *Cal State Long Beach, 562-985-5761.*

UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM (UC SANTA BARBARA) *Continuing.* Wonderlands: Theme Parks, Fairs, and Urban Visions from the Smith and Williams Architectural Archives. *UC Santa Barbara, 805-893-2951.*

FILM, TV & VIDEO

LOOKI UP AT THE SCREEN! IT'S SUPERHEROES ON TELEVISION *Continuing.* Episodes from *Underdog, Mighty Mouse, ElectraWoman and DynaGirl, Buffy the Vampire Slayer,* and *The News; Original Wonder Woman* add pow to the programming. *Call for times. Admission, free. Museum of Television & Radio, 465 N. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-786-1000.*

OUTDOOR PICTURE SHOW *July 28, Aug. 4, and Aug. 11.* This family-friendly venue screens *Scooby-Doo* (July 28), *The Mummy* (Aug. 4), and *School of Rock* (Aug. 11). *At 7. Admission, free. Media City Center, I-5 and Burbank Blvd., Burbank, 818-566-8617.*

100 YEARS . . . 100 MOVIES *July 28–Aug. 25.* The "AFI @ ArcLight" series screens *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (July 28), *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (Aug. 4), *All About Eve* (Aug. 11), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Aug. 18), and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (Aug. 25). *At 8. Tickets, $10–$11. ArcLight Cinemas, 6360 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, 323-464-4226.*

HOLLYWOOD'S MASTER STORYTELLERS: ROBOCOP *July 29.* Actor Peter Weller's in the house giving tips on how to add the human touch to cyborgs. *At 7:30. Tickets, $10–$11. ArcLight Cinemas, 6360 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, 323-464-4226.*

6TH ANNUAL REEL BLACK COWBOY FILM & WESTERN FESTIVAL *July 31.* The Western States Black Research & Educational Center honors Herb "the Bronze Buckaroo" Jeffries with a film fest, poetry reading, and gala all in one day. *Call for time and prices. Museum of the American West, 4700 Western Heritage Way, Griffith Park, 323-252-3967.*

AMERICAN POP *Through Aug. 1.* The museum rocks to tunes originally broadcast on shows like *Your Hit Parade* and channels like MTV when—hel-lo—the *M* stood for "music." *Call for times. Admission, free. Museum of Television & Radio, 465 N. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-786-1000.*

GREAT TO BE NOMINATED, PART ONE *Aug. 2, 9, and 16.* The academy's sequel to its "Facets of the Diamond: 75 Years of Best Picture Winners" series honors some of the runners-up: *A Star Is Born* (Aug. 2), *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (Aug. 9), and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (Aug. 16). *At 7:30. Tickets, $3–$5. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, 310-247-3000, ext. 111.*

7 DUDLEY CINEMA *Aug. 4 and 18.* Jets, sharks, and a girl named Maria populate *West Side Story* (Aug. 4), and Frank Zappa compatriot-clay animator Bruce Bickford gets the bio treatment in *Monster Road* (Aug. 18). *At 8. Admission, free. Sponto Gallery, 7 Dudley Ave., Venice, 310-306-7330.*

5TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FANTASY, HORROR & SCIENCE *Aug. 5–25.* The American Cinematheque opens the fest with a new 35mm print of *Repo Man*, actress Caroline Munro (*The Spy Who Loved Me*) works the crowd during the opening weekend, and the *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* cast and crew gather for a 25th-anniversary screening. *Call for times. Tickets, $6–$9. Egyptian Theater, 6712 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-466-FILM.*

HAMMER SCREENINGS: MEXICAN FILMS *Aug. 6 and 13.* The *Made in Mexico* exhibit adds another layer to the usually music-filled Hammer Plaza: screenings of *Y Tu Mamá También* (Aug. 6) and *El Lugar Sin Límites* (Aug. 13). *At 8. Admission, free. UCLA Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd., Westwood, 310-443-7000.*

FILMS AT SKIRBALL *Aug. 10 and 21.* As part of the "Classic Films" program, Cary Grant shines in *The Thirty Day Princess* (Aug. 10), and then for something completely different, flamenco choreographer Antonio Gades and director Carlos Saura present their Oscar-nominated *Carmen* (Aug. 21). *Call for times. Admission, free. Skirball Cultural Center, 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., West L.A., 310-440-4500.*

NEW VENUE

Museum-in-a-Mall

The Orange County Museum of Art has transformed its South Coast Plaza satellite into the **Orange Lounge**, a space devoted to digital and video art. Chill rooms, plasma screens, and a coffee bar add a club-kid groove designed to lure a new audience. The opening *Hypermedio* exhibit features *Wicked Witch*, large-scale projections by Diana Thater, and *Telephones*, a single-channel video by Christian Marclay. Opens *July 31. Call for times. Admission, free. South Coast Plaza, 3333 Bristol St., Costa Mesa, 714-662-3366.*



BEHIND THE ORANGE CURTAIN, BEHOLD THE ORANGE LOUNGE

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN: BAUER AND WILEY ARCHITECTS

IMPROVISION *Aug. 15.* For this series, the L.A. Connection Comedy Theater turns off the sound to add its own riffs to great camp movies. This month features *Wrestling Women vs. the Aztec Mummy*. *At 7:30. Tickets, $15. Cinespace, 6356 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 323-817-3456.*

SING-A-LONG WIZARD OF OZ *Aug. 21.* The call is out for tin men, wicked witches, and flying monkeys. *Call for time and prices. Greek Theater, 2700 N. Vermont Ave., 213-480-3232.*

OLYMPICS FEVER *Through Aug. 29.* The 20th anniversary of L.A.'s second Olympiad is marked with screenings of *Fists of Freedom* and footage from the 1972 Munich and 2000 Sydney Games. *Call for times. Admission, free. Museum of Television & Radio, 465 N. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-786-1000.*

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

PAVILION OF WINGS *Continuing.* Party down with 30 species of butterfly. *Call for hours. Tickets, $1–$3. Natural History Museum, 900 Exposition Blvd., 213-763-DINO.*

PIT 91 DIG *Continuing.* Paleontologists dig for Ice Age fossils stuck in the big city. *10–4. Admission, free. La Brea Tar Pits, 5801 Wilshire Blvd., 323-934-7243.*

NEON CRUISES *Aug. 7–28.* Atop a double-decker convertible bus, preservationist Eric Lynxwiler points out the bright lights of theaters, architecturally significant buildings, and permanent art installations. *7:30–10:30. Tickets, $35–$45. Meet at Museum of Neon Art, 501 W. Olympic Blvd., 213-489-9918.*

DESCANSO'S L.A. FLOWER DISTRICT WALKING TOUR *Aug. 14.* On behalf of Descanso Gardens, floral designer Ray Tucker leads a bloomin' good albeit early tour of the best-smelling part of downtown. *At 7. Tickets, $18. Call for rendezvous address, 818-949-7980.*

DOWN BY THE RIVER *Aug. 15.* Friends of the Los Angeles River and pals explore the waterway where it runs through the Chinatown cornfields. *At 3:30. Tickets, $5. Meet at the Chinatown Gold Line Station, N. Spring and College Sts., 323-223-0585.*

CONSERVANCY SUMMER NATURALIST PROGRAMS *Through Aug. 31.* Naturalist-led hikes let visitors espy barn swallows from South America, Catalina cherries ripening, and Saint Catherine's lace flowering in Avalon, Little Harbors, and Two Harbors. *Call for times. Admission, free. Visit www.catalinaconservancy.org.*

ISLAND PACKERS *Ongoing.* 'Tis the season for Anacapa, San Miguel, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa Islands to open up their ecosystems to campers, scuba divers, and hikers. *Call 805-642-1393 or 805-382-1719.*

LOS ANGELES CONSERVANCY WALKING TOURS *Ongoing.* The conservancy knows whereof it walks during its jaunts through Spring Street, Union Station, the Broadway Historic Theater District, Angelino Heights, the Biltmore Hotel, and City Hall. *Call 213-623-CITY.*

KID STUFF

LEGOLAND SPORTS JAMS *Continuing.* BMX bikers, bladers, and skateboarders mix big-air stunts with safety-first promos. *Call for times and prices. One LEGO Dr., Carlsbad, 760-918-LEGO.*

FAMILY CULTURAL FESTIVALS *July 28 and Aug. 4.* The Bowers Museum annex is home to Native American music and dance (July 28) and a multiculti drumming circle (Aug. 4). *At 2. Tickets, $5. Kidseum, 1802 N. Main St., Santa Ana, 714-480-1522.*

MTAR RADIO CAMP *Aug. 2–6.* Future Phil Hendries ages 9 to 12 get the 411 on radio plays, including history, voice acting, and sound effects. *1–4:30. Registration, $140–$160. Museum of Television & Radio, 465 N. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills, 310-786-1035.*

MOCAMANIACS SUMMER CAMP *Aug. 2–6 and 23–27.* Kids 9 to 14 tour the metropolis in "Nitty Gritty City" (Aug. 2–6), and teens work in various media in "My Message Has a Method" (Aug. 23–27). *8:30–4. Registration, $250–$275. MOCA at the Geffen Contemporary, 152 N. Central Ave., 213-621-1712.*

HANDS-ON SCIENCE CAMP *Aug. 2–13.* "Skate Science," "Gizmos & Gadgets," "The Rockin' Earth," "Junkyard Science," "Slick & Slimy," "Wizard Science," "Stars, Planets & Rockets," and "Chemical Connection" challenge young minds. *9–11:30 and 12:30–3. Call for registration fees. California Science Center, 700 State Dr., Exposition Park, 213-744-7400.*

KIDSEUM SUMMER ART CAMPS *Aug. 2–20.* Young people get a one-two punch of art and history at these week-long workshops: "Creative, Colorful Art of America's Cultures" (Aug. 2–6), "Pre-Columbian Art Adventure" (Aug. 9–13), and "African Caravans" (Aug. 16–20). *9–5. Registration, $150–$165. Kidseum, 1802 N. Main St., Santa Ana, 714-480-1522.*

OCEAN ADVENTURE DAY CAMP *Aug. 2–20.* Nouveau Cousteaus collect plankton at Rainbow Harbor and assist the animal husbandry staff in the care and feeding of the aquarium's creatures from around the world. *8–noon and 1–5. Registration, $100–$230. Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, 562-590-3100.*

SUMMER FUN DAYS: WHAT'S YOUR MUSE? *Aug. 5, 12, and 19.* Kids five and older examine "Things Seen: Looking at the Real World" (Aug. 5), "Things from the Past: Myths, Stories, and History" (Aug. 12), and "Things Unseen: Imagination, Feelings, and Dreams" (Aug. 19). *At 1. Tickets, $3–$6. Norton Simon Museum of*

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COURTYARD KIDS FAMILY CONCERT *Aug. 7.* The dancers and drummers in Hula Halau o Keali'i o Nalani blend modern and ancient hulas. *4–7. Admission, free. Japanese American National Museum, 369 E. 1st St., 213-625-0414.*

SOARING ADVENTURES *Aug. 11.* After a reading of Tomie de Paola's *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush*, young artists gather inspiration in the Southwest Museum's botanical garden. *3–4. Tickets, $3–$7.50. Southwest Museum, 234 Museum Dr., 323-221-2164.*

SUMMER ART CAMP *Through Aug. 13.* Kids make masks, design journals, and shake tail feathers in a samba dance and drumming class. *9–5. Registration, $125–$150. Museum of Latin American Art, 628 Alamitos Ave., Long Beach, 562-437-1689.*

NECKLACES, BANGLES, AND BEADS *Aug. 14.* Bead maven Ronald Jackson breaks out the glass baubles to make jewelry. *1–3. Admission, free; reservations required. California African American Museum, 600 State Dr., Exposition Park, 213-744-7432.*

GARDEN CONCERTS FOR KIDS *Aug. 14–15 and 21–22.* Kids dig garden-fresh tunes by Sharon Katz and the Peace Train (Aug. 14–15) and Trout Fishing in America (Aug. 21–22). *At 4. Admission, free. Getty Center, 1200 Getty Center Dr., West L.A., 310-440-7300.*

BELOVED DEARLY *Aug. 14–22.* Life lessons and laughs fill Doug Cooney's play about a 12-year-old mogul in the making who organizes pet funerals. *At 1 and 4. Tickets, $7. South Coast Repertory, 655 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, 714-708-5555.*

ADVENTURES IN NATURE *Through Aug. 20.* The Natural History Museum and the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits offer behind-the-scenes tours for peewee paleontologists. *9:30–11:30 and 1–3. Registration, $99–$218. Natural History Museum, 900 Exposition Blvd. Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits, 5801 Wilshire Blvd. Call 213-763-DINO.*

IDYLLWILD ARTS SUMMER PROGRAM *Through Aug. 21.* Creative kids hie to the mountains to study dance, ceramics, computer animation, printmaking, filmmaking, music, photography, jewelry design, and classical theater. *Visit www.idyllwildarts.org.*

LACMA'S WEISMAN FAMILY SUNDAYS *Aug. 22 and 29.* Minimalism is maximized by way of the *Beyond Geometry* exhibit and the "ABC Art" workshop. *At 12:30. Call for prices. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 5905 Wilshire Blvd., 323-857-6000.*

THE LEGEND OF ALEX *Opens Aug. 27.* The peripatetic Doug Cooney (*Beloved Dearly*) and David O (*The Shaggs: Philosophy of the World*) team up for a musical comedy/cautionary tale about celebrity. *Call for times. Tickets, $7.50–$15. Powerhouse Theater, 3116 2nd St., Santa Monica, 866-OFFMAIN.*

ARMORY CENTER FOR THE ARTS *Through Aug. 27.* Budding artists try their hand at pop-up books, horror movies, piñatas, rockets, stop-motion animation, Web site creation, and improv. *Call for times and prices. 145 N. Raymond Ave., Pasadena, 626-792-5101.*

FLEA MARKETS

LONG BEACH OUTDOOR ANTIQUE & COLLECTIBLE MARKET Collectors of pottery and toys consider this market mecca. *Third Sun. of the month, 5:30–3. Admission, $4.50–$10. Veterans Memorial Stadium, Lakewood Blvd. and Conant St., Long Beach, 323-655-5703.*

MELROSE TRADING POST A fine follow-up to pancakes at Du-par's is riffling through the Post's odds and ends. *Sun., 9–5. Admission, $1–$2. Fairfax High School, 1040 N. Fairfax Ave., 323-655-POST.*

PASADENA CITY COLLEGE FLEA MARKET PCC's famous record row reeks of high fidelity. And that's a good thing. *First Sun. of the month, 8–3. Admission, free. 1570 E. Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, 626-585-7906.*

ROSE BOWL FLEA MARKET This mother of them all sells everything from Victoriana to '60s memorabilia. *Second Sun. of the month, 6–4:30. Admission, $6–$15. 1001 Rose Bowl Dr., Pasadena, 323-560-7469.*

SANTA MONICA OUTDOOR ANTIQUE & COLLECTIBLE MARKET The top-drawer items sold here are ideal for folks flying in by Lear jet. *First and Fourth Sun. of the month, 8–3. Admission, $5–$7. Santa Monica Airport, Airport Ave. and Bundy Dr., Santa Monica, 323-933-2511.*

FARMERS' MARKETS

A fresh market seems to be cropping up in the Los Angeles area every month, and with the array of fresh produce comes the indelible feeling of community. Here are some of the pickin's, mostly culled from three well-tended Web sites: www.seasonalchef.com, www.cafarmersmarkets.com, and www.cafarmersmarkets.org.

MONDAY

BELLFLOWER Oak and Clark Sts., 9–1.
SOUTH GATE Tweedy Blvd. and Pinehurst Ave., 9–1.
WEST HOLLYWOOD Plummer Park, 1200 N. Vista St., 9–2.

TUESDAY

CULVER CITY Washington and Venice Blvds., 3–7.
NORWALK Alondra and Pioneer Blvds., 8–2.
PASADENA E. Villa St. and Garfield Ave., 8:30–12:30.
TORRANCE Charles H. Wilson Park, 2200 Crenshaw Blvd., 8–1.



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August-September 2004

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This Month at the Getty Aug 04



Peter Paul Rubens, Nicolas Poussin, Gianlorenzo Bernini, Claude Lorrain, and Pietro da Cortona.

STATUE OF AN EMPEROR: A CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

Through Sept 12, 2004

Features a statue of the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, on loan from the Pergamon Museum in Berlin for conservation work. Video and animation footage illustrate the process, which involved disassembly and reassembly of the statue fragments by a joint team of Getty and Berlin conservators.

SEA TAILS: A VIDEO COLLABORATION

Through Sept 26, 2004
Research Institute Exhibition Gallery

The genius of American musical pioneer David Tudor (1926–1996) is celebrated in this unique exhibition, which reconstructs his 1983 installation of *Sea Tails*, a video collaboration with Molly Davies that features fanciful underwater kites made by artist Jackie Matisse.



Left: Underwater Kite, Nassau, Bahamas, 1980s. © Photograph by Robert Cassoly. Jackie Matisse Collection.

Exhibitions

THE ARTS OF FIRE: ISLAMIC INFLUENCES ON THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

Through Sept 5, 2004

The exhibition examines the impact of Islamic artwork and ceramic and glass-making techniques that arrived in Italy in the late Middle Ages and made possible the groundbreaking Italian production of the 15th and 16th centuries.

VISIONS OF GRANDEUR: DRAWING IN THE BAROQUE AGE

Through Sept 12, 2004

Drawings from the Getty's permanent collection survey common trends in Western art during the 17th century, or Baroque period. Features a number of new acquisitions and works by

SPIRIT INTO MATTER: THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF EDMUND TESKE

Through Sept 26, 2004

This first comprehensive retrospective of the work of Edmund Teske features some 120 photographs by one of the unheralded alchemists of 20th-century American photography. These include richly evocative figure studies, rhapsodies on nature, views of Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture, studies in abstraction, and portraits of Hollywood celebrities—many of which have never been published or exhibited.

Closing this Month:

FIT FOR A KING: COURTLY MANUSCRIPTS, 1380–1450

Closes Aug 29, 2004

For Families

GARDEN CONCERTS FOR KIDS

Sat & Sun, Aug 14–15 and 21–22
4–6 pm, Central Garden

Garden Concerts for Kids return for a third season of rockin' tunes for fidgety feet in the Getty's Central Garden. On August 14–15, learn children's songs and dances with celebrated 45-member South African ensemble **Sharon Katz & The Peace Train** and on August 21–22, don't miss hilarious guitar-and-bass duo **Trout Fishing in America**, whose recordings have garnered multiple Parents Choice Gold Awards and American Library Awards.

FAMILY FESTIVAL

Sat, Aug 28, 10 am–6 pm,
Museum Courtyard

Enjoy music and dance from India, Celtic lands, and beyond; watch Will & Company perform Robin Hood; frolic with a giant dragonfly; or wander over to a workshop and create your own memento of the day.

ART ADVENTURES FOR FAMILIES

Daily at 2 pm

Our one-hour tours for children (ages 5 and up) and adults to enjoy together feature a fun, activity-filled visit to the galleries. Offered in English and Spanish. Sign-up begins at 1:30 pm at the Information Desk in the Museum Entrance Hall.

ARTFUL WEEKENDS

Thursdays through Sundays,
11 am–3 pm, Family Room Patio

Join your children in an outdoor, drop-in workshop designed to exercise the imagination. Create your own masterpiece, and don't miss seeing others in the galleries. Offered in English and Spanish.



Right: *Trout Fishing in America*

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Talks & Tours

CURATORS GALLERY TALKS

Tues, Aug 3 and 10
1 pm, Museum Entrance Hall

Come hear a discussion on the exhibition *The Arts of Fire*, focusing on the debt owed to the Islamic world for the development of Italian Renaissance ceramics and glass.

DRAWING FROM THE OLD MASTERS: CHIAROSCURO

Tues, Aug 3
1–3:30 pm, Museum studios and galleries

Examine original works of art and participate in guided drawing exercises to discover how the old masters employed light and shadow in their works. Class fee $15; limited to 20 participants.

Course repeats on August 8 and 31, 1–3:30 pm
Reservations available 7/23 at 9 am

GETTY DRAWING HOUR

Fri, Aug 6
7–8:30 pm, Museum galleries

Enjoy the tradition of plein-air sketching in the Central Garden during this new Friday night program. All you need to bring are drawing pads and pencils or pastels. All experience levels welcome. Free; limited to 25 participants. Sign up at the Museum Information Desk beginning at 6 p.m. the day of the program.

Course repeats on August 20, 7–8:30 pm

IN THE SPIRIT OF TESKE

Thurs, Aug 12 and 19
1–3 pm, Museum galleries

Examine the art and life of photographer Edmund Teske in this two-part course related to the exhibition *Spirit into Matter*. Course fee $20; limited to 25 participants.

Reservations available 7/23 at 9 am

Left: Edmund Teske, *Mono Lake, California, Composite with Three Children*, 1976. Gelatin silveer composite print. © Edmund Teske Archives/Laurence Bump & Nils Vidstrand (2003).

POINT-OF-VIEW TALKS

Fri, Aug 20
6 and 7:30 pm, Museum galleries

Fine-art photographers talk about the *Spirit into Matter* exhibition. Sign up at the Museum Information Desk beginning at 4:30 pm.

ARTIST-AT-WORK DEMONSTRATION

Aug 5, 8, 12, 15, 19, 22, 26, 29
1–3 pm, Museum Courtyard

Drop by for a demonstration of the art of calligraphy.

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF ALL TALKS & TOURS, VISIT GETTY.EDU





Looking Ahead

EXHIBITIONS:

COMING OF AGE IN ANCIENT GREECE: IMAGES OF CHILDHOOD FROM THE CLASSICAL PAST
Sept 14–Dec 5, 2004

Right: *Statuette of a Woman Carrying a Boy on Her Shoulders*, Greek, made in Boiotia, 500–475 B.C.

BYZANTIUM AND THE WEST
Sept 14–Dec 5, 2004

PERFORMING ARTS:

FRIDAY NIGHTS AT THE GETTY
Sept 20
An Evening with John Hammond.
Sept 27
Iris Dement.
Reservations for both events available 8/25 at 9 am

TALKS & TOURS:

THE BRIGHTNESS BECKONS: AGING AND MORTALITY AS THEMES IN THE WORK OF EDMUND TESKE, WALLACE BERMAN, AND JAY DE FEO
Sept 12



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WEDNESDAY

LOS ANGELES Saint Agnes Catholic Church, Adams Blvd. and Vermont Ave., 2–5.
NORTHRIDGE Northridge Fashion Center (north end), 9301 Tampa Ave., 5–9.
SAN DIMAS Bonita Ave. between Monte Vista and San Dimas Aves., 5–9.
SANTA MONICA Arizona Ave. and 2nd St., 9–2.
WESTCHESTER 87th St. and Truxton Ave., 8:30–1.

THURSDAY

CARSON Bonita and Carson Sts., 9–1.
CENTURY CITY Constellation Blvd. between Avenue of the Stars and Century Park East, 11:30–3.
CHINATOWN 727 North Hill St., 4–8.
EL SEGUNDO City Hall, 350 Main St., 3–7.
FULLERTON Wilshire Ave. between Harbor Blvd. and Pomona Ave., 4–8:30.
GLENDALE 100 N. Brand Blvd., 7:30–1:30.
GLENDORA N. Glendora Ave. between Foothill Blvd. and Bennett Ave., 5:30–9.
LONG BEACH Promenade North and Broadway, 10–4.
LOS ANGELES La Cienega Blvd. and 18th St., 3–7:30.
LOS ANGELES 735 S. Figueroa St., 11–4.
REDONDO BEACH Torrance Blvd. and Harbor Dr., 8–1.
SIGNAL HILL Walnut Ave. and 27th St., 3–8.
SOUTH PASADENA Meridian Ave. and Mission St., 4–8.
THOUSAND OAKS Oaks Shopping Center, corner of Wilbur Rd. and Thousand Oaks Blvd., 3–7.
WEST HOLLYWOOD 647 N. San Vicente Blvd., 2–7.
WESTWOOD Weyburn Ave. and Westwood Blvd., 1–7.

FRIDAY

COVINA Citrus Ave. in front of Civic Center, 4–9.
EAGLE ROCK 2100 Merton Ave., 5–8:30.
HERMOSA BEACH Valley Dr. between 8th and 10th Sts., noon–4.
LONG BEACH Promenade North and Broadway, 10–4.
MONROVIA Myrtle Ave. between Walnut and Lemon Aves., 5–9.
VENICE Venice Blvd. and Venice Way, 7–11.
WHITTIER Bailey St. and Greenleaf Ave., 8–1.
WILSHIRE CENTER Mariposa Ave. between Wilshire Blvd. and 6th St., 11:30–3.

SATURDAY

BURBANK Olive Ave. between Glen Oaks Blvd. and 3rd St., 8–12:30.
CALABASAS Calabasas Rd. and El Cañon St., 8–1.
CERRITOS Park Plaza and Towne Center Drs., 8–noon.
GARDENA Hollypark Methodist Church, 13000 S. Van Ness Ave., 6:30–noon.
LOS ANGELES 3655 Grand Ave., 2–5.
PASADENA Pasadena High School, Paloma St. and Sierra Madre Blvd., 8:30–12:30.
SANTA MONICA Arizona Ave. and 3rd St., 8:30–1.
SANTA MONICA Airport Ave. and Donald Douglas Loop, 8–1.
SILVER LAKE 3700 W. Sunset Blvd., 8–1.
TORRANCE Charles H. Wilson Park, 2200 Crenshaw Blvd., 8–1.
WEST COVINA S. Glendora Ave. and Lakes Dr., 8–12.

SUNDAY

ALHAMBRA Monterey and E. Bay State Sts., 8:30–1.
BEVERLY HILLS 450 N. Rexford Dr., 9–1.
CLAREMONT 2nd St. between Indian Hill Blvd. and Yale Ave., 8–1.
ENCINO Victory Blvd. and White Oak Ave., 8–1.
HOLLYWOOD Ivar Ave. between Hollywood and Sunset Blvds., 8–1.
LARCHMONT VILLAGE Larchmont Blvd. between Beverly Blvd. and 1st St., 10–2.
LONG BEACH Marina Dr., south of 2nd St., 9–1.
LOS ANGELES 8400 Melrose Pl. between Melrose and Croft Aves., 9–1.
MONTROSE 2300 Honolulu Ave., 9–2.
PACIFIC PALISADES Swarthmore Ave. between Sunset Blvd. and Monument St., 8–1:30.
PALOS VERDES Peninsula Center parking lot, Hawthorne Blvd. and Silver Spur Rd., 9–1.
SANTA CLARITA College of the Canyons, Valencia Blvd., lot 8, 8:30–noon.
SANTA MONICA Ocean Park Blvd. and Main St., 9:30–1.
STUDIO CITY Ventura Blvd. and Ventura Pl., 8–1.
WEST HOLLYWOOD Melrose Pl., 10–2.

DESTINATION: LONG BEACH

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WHEN: July 31–Aug. 1.
WHERE: Long Beach Marine Stadium, 5225 E. Paoli Way, www.lbdragonboat.com.

WHAT: Long Beach Jazz Festival.
WOW: Poncho Sanchez, David Sanborn, Al Jarreau, the Jazz Crusaders, and Joyce Cooling stay smooth in the ocean breeze.
WHEN: Aug. 13–15.
WHERE: Rainbow Lagoon Park between Shoreline Dr. and Linden Ave., www.longbeachjazzfestival.com.

WHAT: Celtic Music Festival.
WOW: Jam sessions, dance workshops, and the Queen Medb Reenactment Camp are fine draws, but the sheep-herding demo? Priceless.
WHEN: Aug. 14.
WHERE: Queen Mary Events Park, 1126 Queens Hwy., www.longbeachcelticfestival.com.



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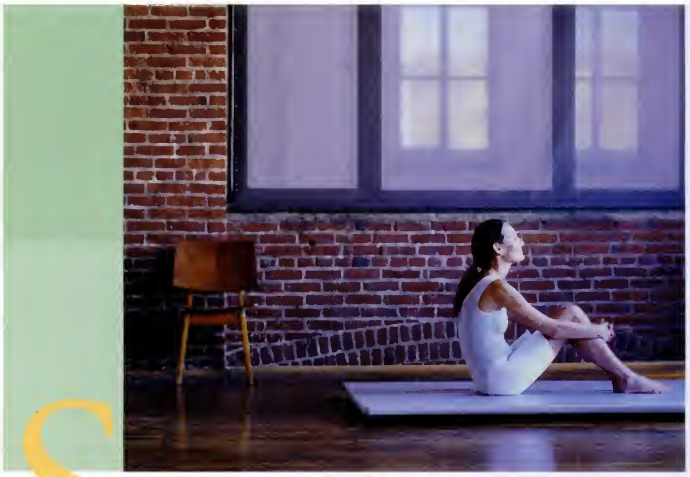
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Look Good, FEEL GOOD

TEN WAYS TO LOOK AND FEEL BETTER BY LABOR DAY

BY MATT FITZGERALD



SUMMER IS ALL ABOUT BEING HEALTHY AND LOOKING YOUR BEST. AT LEAST IT USED TO BE, BACK IN THE DAYS OF SCHOOL BREAKS AND LONG DAYS OF POOLSIDE TANNING, BODYSURFING, AND CRUISING AROUND ON BIKES AND SKATEBOARDS. ADULTHOOD, BY CONTRAST, HAS A WAY OF BLEEDING SOME OF THE VIGOR AND SEXINESS OUT OF SUMMERTIME, AND THAT'S A SHAME.

Another summer is halfway gone, and chances are it's been more of the same. Ask yourself: Am I looking and feeling any better now than I was in March? Don't fret. There are still a few weeks left before you have to start thinking of a Halloween costume – plenty of time to do something nice just for yourself. If you need suggestions, you're in the right place. Here are ten ways you can look and feel better by Labor Day, just like old times.

1. Take ten years off your face

In many women and men, nothing shows age like sagging eyelids. The bright side is that a little cosmetic surgery in just this one area can make a person look a lot younger. "Eyelid surgery, or blepharoplasty, gives women and men a good feeling, whether they're in their thirties or their seventies," says Babak Azizzadeh, M.D., a Beverly Hills-based plastic surgeon. "The surgery is straightforward, requires very little downtime, and has hidden incisions or none at all, so no one can tell you've had surgery. And it really gives a great, youthful appearance."

Another option is injectable fillers, which are used to enhance the smoothness and contouring of the face. New fillers such as Restylane require no allergy testing, last up to 12 months, and result in little to no posttreatment downtime. "You can just come in, get your wrinkles treated, and walk out, and you look fine," says Ronda Rand, M.D., a Beverly Hills dermatologist.

The most promising new filler, according to Michael Franco, M.D., a dermatologist practicing in Sherman Oaks, is called Radiance. The compound used in Radiance is calcium hydroxylaptite, a natural component of teeth and bones. Unlike some older fillers it remains soft and pliable, lasts as long as five years, and has no known side effects.

If surgery of any kind is a little too extreme for your tastes, there are now a variety of nonsurgical ways to achieve a younger-looking face. One of the world's leaders in antiaging dermatology is Zein Obagi, M.D., founder of Obagi Medical Products in Long Beach. His approach is to improve the appearance of the face by improving the health of the skin. "Healthy skin is the ideal," he states.

The Obagi Nu-Derm system is a topical treatment that uses powerful tretinoin with exfoliating acids and skin-bleaching agents to improve the elasticity of the skin, increase smoothness, and diminish fine lines and wrinkles. To find an Obagi-trained doctor near you, visit www.obagi.com.

2. Feel ten years younger

Aging is, of course, a normal part of life, but accelerated aging is not. If you are over 45 and you look and feel much older than others your age, you may have a treatable disorder known as adult growth hormone deficiency. Symptoms of this condition include abdominal weight gain, muscle loss, and elevated LDL "bad" cholesterol, but testing is needed to make a definite diagnosis.

Los Angeles-based endocrinologist Susan Pekarovics, M.D., is among the local medical professionals who provide this testing as well as growth hormone therapy for those who have abnormally low growth hormone levels. The treatment entails daily, self-administered injections using a device that looks like a ballpoint pen and causes only minimal discomfort. "Patients usually feel better after just the second or third shot," says Pekarovics.

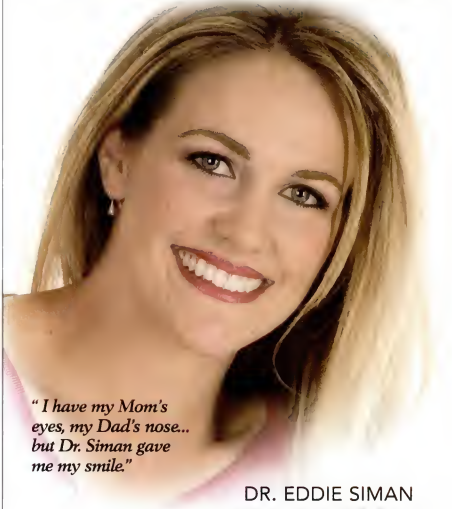
3. Perfect your smile

Cosmetic dentistry is another simple yet powerful way to improve your appearance. Recent innovations in veneers – such as the high-tech, customized veneers made by Da Vinci Studios of West Hills, as featured on Extreme Makeover and The Swan – as well as advances in whitening techniques and other areas, make it possible for everyone to have a beautiful smile. But the skill of the dentist is still paramount, says Brian LeSage, D.D.S., a cosmetic dentistry specialist in Beverly Hills.

"I'm opposed to the fake-looking teeth – the ones that cry out 'Dentist!'" says John Ivey, D.M.D., who has been performing cosmetic dentistry in Los Angeles since 1978. But fake-looking teeth are all too

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often the result when potients ore treoted by a dentist who, unlike Ivey, lacks an aesthetic sense and the inclination to truly customize treatment to the individual mouth.

Recent innovations in veneers—as well as advances in whitening techniques and other areas, make it possible for everyone to have a beautiful smile.

One recent innovation in dentistry that has little to do with technology is the concept of spa dentistry, as practiced by Millennium Dental (www.sexysmiles.com) in Sherman Oaks and Grace Sun, D.D.S., in Beverly Hills (www.sundds.com).

"Spa dentistry takes the anxiety out of visiting the dentist," says Millennium Dental's Eddie Siman, D.D.S. "The environment is totally relaxing. We have soothing colors, and we use aromatherapy throughout the office. Our dental chairs are very comfortable and are positioned so that all you see is blue sky through the windows. Patients have a choice of watching a movie or choosing music from our library that they can listen to during their treatment. We also offer reflexology treatments, monicures, and pedicures at no extra charge. All of our rooms are equipped with nitrous oxide, and we do sleep dentistry, where patients can take a pill and go to sleep during their treatment."

4. Fix your skin

Laser resurfacing is an effective way to correct sun-damaged skin by erasing pigmentations, fine lines, and wrinkles. The only negatives are the pain of treatments

and the following downtime.

But this is soon to change, thanks to an innovation from Reliant Technologies called Fraxel, which unlike previous devices affects only damaged skin while sparing healthy tissue. As a result, "patients don't feel anything more than a rubber band snap on the forearm, and at most they get slightly pink, like the first summer sun," says Barry Weintraub, M.D., a Beverly Hills plastic surgeon and the very first practitioner with an on-site Fraxel laser. "After four treatments you've resurfaced someone's face without putting them through the hell that prior, higher-wavelength lasers have done."

A word of caution: If you're considering a laser treatment for damage, wrinkles, toning, or hair removal, be sure to choose a board-certified dermatologist such as Vicki Rapaport, M.D., of Beverly Hills, or Patrick Abergel, M.D., of Santa Monica.

"There are some rather sketchy bargain clinics out there," says Michael Miller, M.D., of the Advanced Laser and Anti-Aging Medical Center in Pasadena (www.laserbeauty.com). "A lot of people doing laser procedures at these places are just nurses, and they're not board-certified."

Laser treatments are not as simple as pointing and zapping. "You have to really look at a face and individualize the therapy," says Robert Seltzer, M.D., who is Miller's colleague. "To get the best treatment you have to play with different devices and individualize the treatment. People who are not experts usually have a cookie-cutter approach. Most clinics have one or two lasers. We have over 20 lasers in our practice."

5. Fine-tune your shape

The best way to sculpt a better physique is by exercising, as the results come with many health benefits. When pockets of flab remain in your belly, hips, or another area despite your hard work in the gym, liposuction can complete the job.

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ever. In power liposuction the cannula, which is the strawlike instrument used to suck out fat, vibrates at a very high frequency. "That vibration is useful when we're doing liposuction in tough areas, like someone's back or a man's chest," says Ralph Massey, M.D., a Santa Monica-based plastic surgeon and dermatologist. "In those areas, with regular liposuction, it can be quite difficult to force your way through. With power liposuction, the cannula can more or less glide through."

For the budget-conscious, perhaps the greatest new development in body recontouring surgeries is that they have become more affordable, even at some highly reputable facilities.

If substantial weight loss has left you with a lot of loose skin, or if you've recently been pregnant, an abdominoplasty (i.e., tummy tuck) might be in order. "We're doing a lot more tummy tucks these days, especially in women who have recently given birth," says Lloyd Krieger, M.D., of Rodeo Drive Plastic Surgery (www.rodeodriveplasticsurgery.com). "They want the tight, contoured body they had before pregnancy." Krieger notes that new techniques in reconstructing the navel allow tummy tucks to produce more natural-looking results than in the past.

There is also a new technique in abdominoplasty that allows surgeons to do liposuction and a tummy tuck at the same time without increasing the risk of complications. "It's called lateral tension abdominoplasty," says Daniel Golshani, M.D., a plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills who practices the new technique. In addition to allowing liposuction to be done simultaneously, it results in less visible scarring and a more contoured appearance.

For the budget-conscious, perhaps the greatest new development in body recontouring surgeries is that they have become more affordable, even at some highly reputable facilities. In the past, one had to be wary of surgeons who touted lower prices, but nowadays facilities such as the New Me Institute (www.newmeinstitute.com), with five locations in and around Los Angeles County, offer excellent prices without sacrificing safety or quality.

6. Kick a bad habit

Quite a different sort of problem than loose skin and love handles is addiction to prescription, opiate-based pain medications such as Vicodin, a growing problem in the United States. The Waismann Institute in Beverly Hills uses cutting-edge medicine to treat this addiction, with a remarkable success rate.

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"By the time they wake up, the withdrawal is behind them," says Clare Waismann, the institute's executive director.

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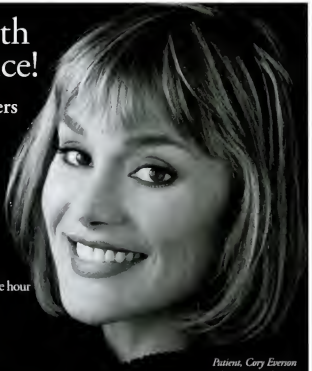
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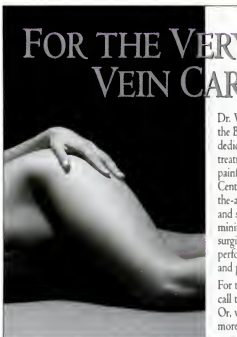
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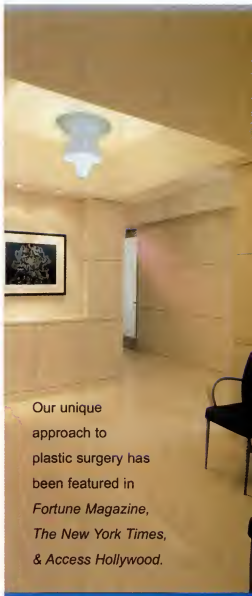
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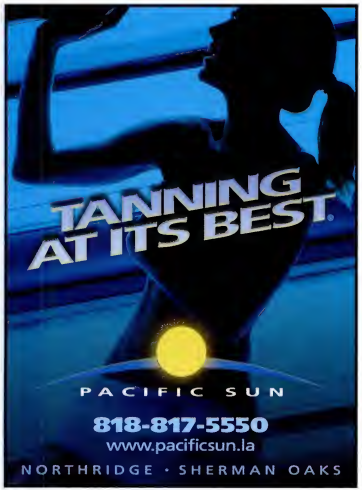
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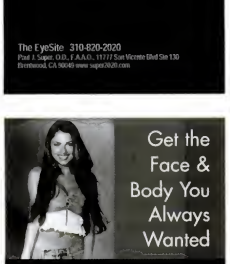
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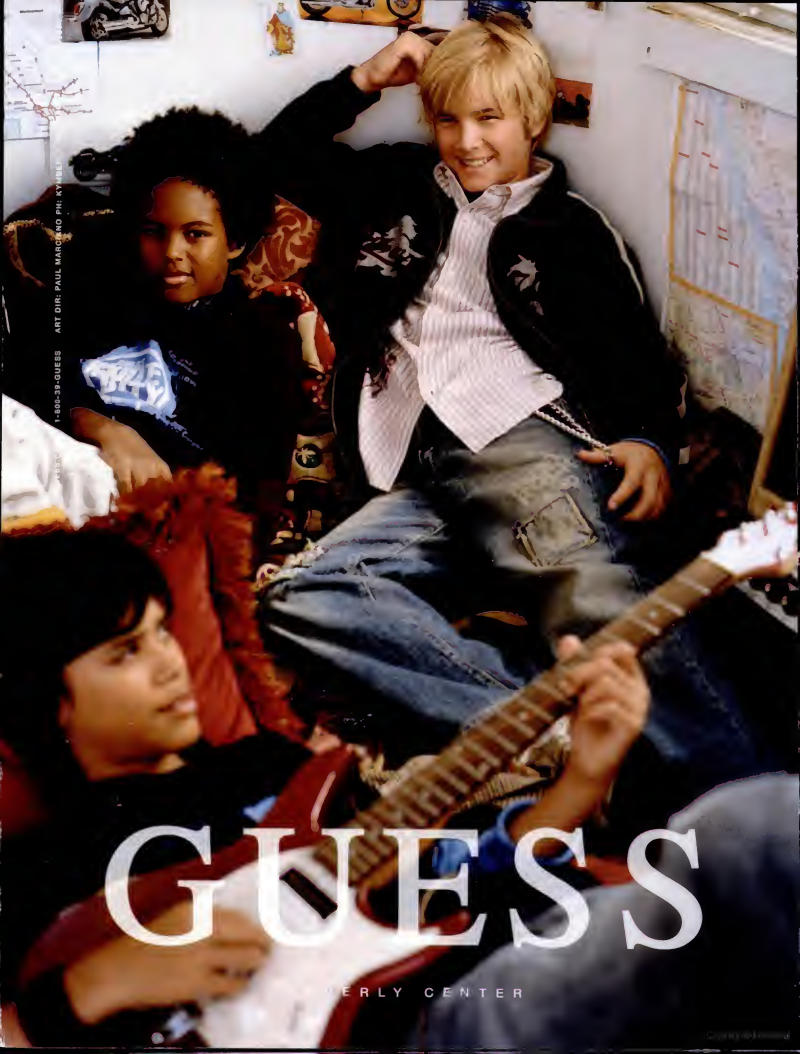
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